new masses

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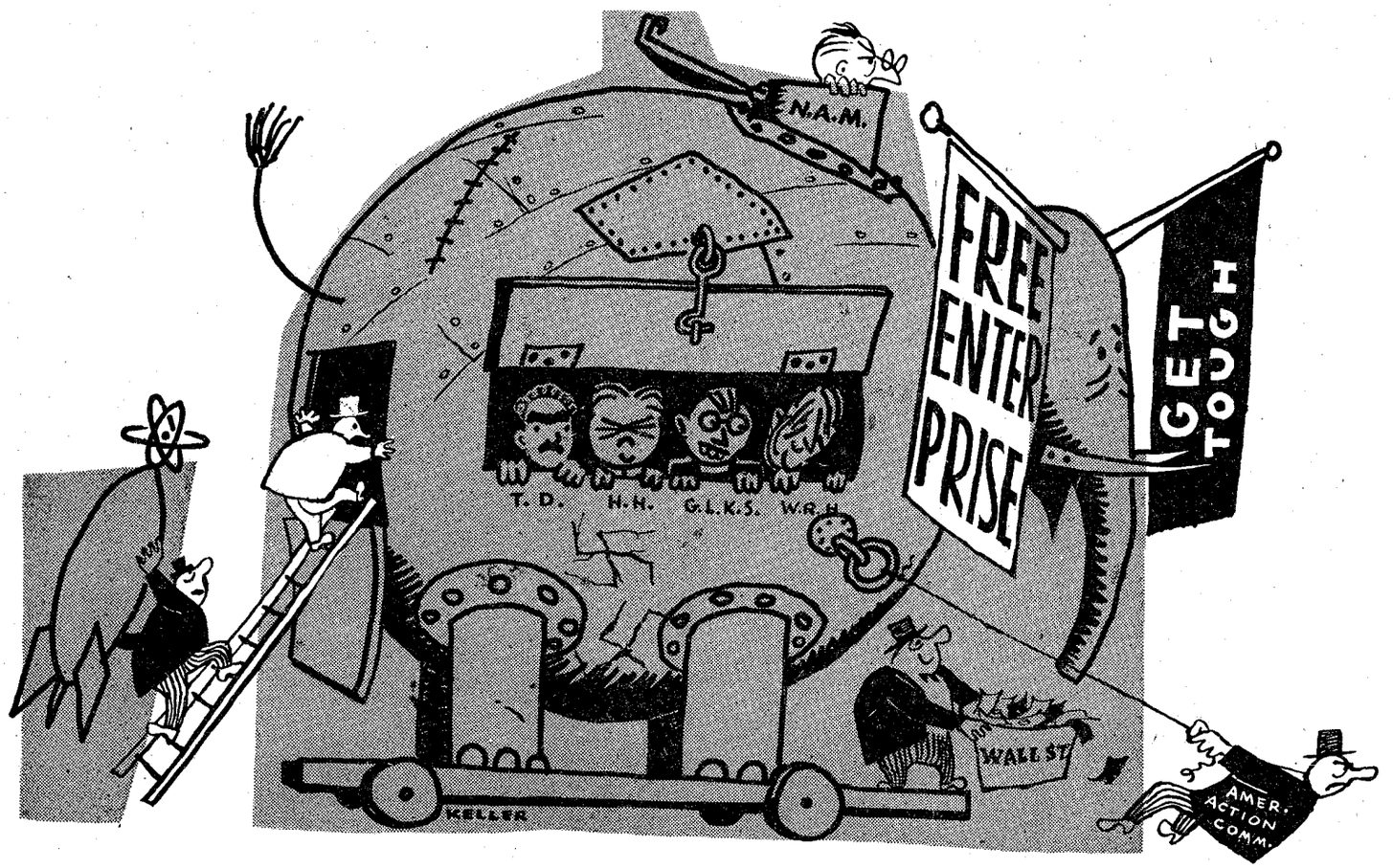

CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT: 3 CITIES by A. B. Magil

THE SHAPE OF WORLD POLITICS by Eugene Varga

WHAT WE SAW IN LAWRENCEBURG

by Harry Raymond and Oliver Harrington

JERICHO, USA

a short story

by Lloyd L. Brown

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just a minute

"CAPITALISM is just too strong, that's all," our liberal friend said sadly after we had talked over the Meat Situation, "it's too strong to be controlled." So strong that the meat-packing hogs could, on the first day of "decontrol," raise the price of beef on the hoof from the OPA ceiling of $20.25 to the steeple price of $35.25 a hundredweight. And the price of pork from $16.25 to $27.50.

Since we can't afford to pay the $1.10 a pound for pork chops demanded by our neighborhood butchershop, we weren't so sure that this inflation was a sign of strength. We showed our L.F. "Why the Boom Will Bust," by Emile Burns, which we published last week, wherein the author stated: "This pegging of prices above values is a particularly important factor in hastening and prolonging the crisis, particularly where monopoly is widespread; for it accentuates and maintains the gap between production and consumption." Not that the strong boys care about that.

FORM is the all-important thing that makes an All-American end or a Miss America front. But sometimes we're happy to see form go by the boards, like in the recent World Series triumph of the Cardinal underdogs. Upsetting the dopesters (and breaking the bookies), form and the Red Sox took a helluva shellacking.

But otherwise things are going pretty much according to the books, it seems. Bill Green is reelected president of the AFL as he has been regularly since 1924: election time one and one-half minutes, according to the press, which is very accurate about some things. And Green denounces the Reds in his acceptance speech as the "most dynamic reactionary force in our country"!

And George Soule is still proving that Marx can't be right, regardless. While we were telling "Why the Boom Will Bust"—based on a Marxian analysis of present economic trends—Mr. Soule was writing in the *New Republic* last week that "Marx Was Wrong About Depressions." Can capitalist depressions be abolished? The perennially hopeful Mr. Soule replies that "the evidence does not prove that the problem is insoluble." And he calls our attention to "one tiny ray of hope," which is that in recent years "the swings of interest rates for call money have become smaller." Then comes the haymaker to the bushy chin of Karl Marx: "If the nation as a whole consciously employed measures to moderate other and more important fluctuations, it might succeed, provided it knew enough to adopt the right measures."

We wonder if Brother Soule has tried to buy some pork chops recently. One thing is sure: the people of this country (including Mr. Soule and us) had better get busy fighting against the "fluctuations" which are driving us toward another smash-up.

OLIVER W. HARRINGTON makes his first appearance this week in NM with his courtroom sketches which illustrate Harry Raymond's article. Mr. Harrington was on the scene as a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of which he is the Public Relations Director. A Yale man with a master's degree in fine arts, he is a journalist as well as a painter and cartoonist. He served as a war correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, for which paper he created his famous comic cartoon character, "Bootsie." His political cartoons appear weekly in the *People's Voice* and he draws for many other Negro newspapers as well. We hope to have him with us soon again.

HAVE you ever been in Baltimore, where the *Sun* shines all day? Whether you have or not you'll enjoy Virginia Gardner's articles about the Maryland metropolis, the first of which will appear next week. Virginia says it's "a city rich in cultural life, with its world-renowned Peabody Conservatory of Music and excellent Maryland Institute of Art—but they are Jim Crow."

And Charles Humboldt is following up his recent reportage on the Norwalk teachers (NM, October 1 and 8) with an article on the teachers and school system of New York City. Watch for it in an early issue.

L. L. B.

new masses

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CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT: THREE CITIES

From Chicago to Milwaukee, from Milwaukee to Denver—a cross-country report on the battle for the ballots. Who are the people's candidates?

By A. B. MAGIL

En route to Seattle

THIS is being written on the train in the foothills of the Blue Mountains of Oregon, nearly two thousand miles west of Chicago. The friendly, elderly gentleman informed me at breakfast that this is sheep country, though all I have seem are cattle and horses—and not many of those. Traveling across the continent, America's hugeness unfolds in the fat farmlands, in the long sweeping prairie, in the knotted mountains and the curving rivers, in the coal and steel and copper and lumber hacked out of the earth.

But America's greatness is also its people. "The people will live on," wrote Carl Sandburg in *The People, Yes:*

They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing root-holds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.

Ten years have passed since Sandburg saw the American people primarily as tough and enduring, with a "capacity to take it." "This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers," he said of the people. But since then the CIO has risen and millions of Americans have gone through the school of the New Deal crusade against the economic royalists and of the war against fascism. The people and especially their working-class core have shown a capacity not only to take it, but to dish it out—to become hammer as well as anvil. No, not completely of course. The process is uneven and there are many weak spots and still too much of merely being anvil to reaction's hammer. But fourteen million trade unionists are a power which didn't exist ten years ago. That power unfortunately is divided, which makes it less effective. But never-

"Your turn, mister."

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theless it is there as a yeast in the people. On this trip I have seen passivity —but also motion, effort and struggle.

All of which is by way of introduction to a few notes on political developments in three cities. I call them notes because my speaking schedule hasn't permitted me to stay long enough in any place to present a fuller picture.

In my last piece [NM, October 15], I wrote about the Chicago Conference of Progressives and about the Illinois political scene. I told about looking in on the exciting campaign of one of the three independent candidates for the state legislature, Mrs. Dorothea S. Allen. Before leaving Chicago I managed to get a glimpse —all too fleeting—of how another of the independent candidates, Mrs. Sylvia Woods, is waging the battle. She is a Negro worker and is financial secretary-treasurer of Local 330, United Automobile Workers-CIO. She is running in the twenty-first senatorial district which has a mixed population, with about one-fourth Negro, and the rest largely Polish, Italian, Norwegian and German.

I visited Sylvia Woods the day she opened her headquarters in an empty store at 2547 W. Lake Street, in the Negro section of the district. A man was just leaving as I entered and Mrs. Woods introduced him as the minister of her church. Several white campaign workers were there, busy inserting leaflets in the special election issue of the new progressive weekly, the *Chicago Star*. Mrs. Woods is thirty-four and the mother of a sixteen-year-old boy. In her face is the strength and warmth and self-assurance of one who has come to her kind of thinking the hard way and has learned that to be a Negro in America, living with dignity and hope, means to be a rebel against all the outrages and evils that capitalist America visits on the great mass of Americans, black and white.

Just behind the table at which Sylvia Woods sat the store ended abruptly in a cardboard wall. I was told that behind the wall lived a Negro family —in the windowless rear of the store. I walked out of the store and saw what in other days were known as Hoovervilles (remember?). Today, in this Indian summer of our postwar economy, they are the homes of Negro men, women and children. This is what Sylvia Woods has been talking about at street meetings, before community groups and church clubs. And she has been talking about meat and the crime of the packing trusts, about playgrounds and schools, about outlawing restrictive covenants (a highfalutin name for a despicable thing), about repealing the sales tax and the need for a state FEPC. ("We've got a city FEPC," she told me, "but it isn't worth the paper it's written on.") And she has also been talking about the way international problems impinge on and mingle with the problems of the twenty-first district—about Big Three unity, about Wallace and Pepper and the path of FDR.

Three state representatives are to be elected from each of Illinois' senatorial districts. For years the Republicans and Democrats in Chicago have had a gentlemen's agreement by which they have divided up the jobs and have saved themselves the trouble and expense of campaigning. Hence their annoyance that in the twenty-ninth district, where Dorothea Allen is running, and in the twenty-first, where Sylvia Woods is the candidate, the division of jobs is being threatened—seriously. I was told that so wide is the backing of both these people's candidates that they stand excellent chances of election. In addition, in the fifth senatorial district Claude Lightfoot, Negro Communist leader of Chicago's Harlem, the South Side, is an independent candidate for the state senate, though he is heavily handicapped by having been thrown off the ballot, necessitating a write-in vote.

FROM Chicago to Milwaukee is only about seventy miles, but politically it was like going to another world, an incredible world, yet grimly in the flesh. I arrived in Milwaukee in the midst of a frenetic Red-baiting drive which may well be a laboratory test for the rest of the country. It is a combination of union-busting and political terrorism, and its aim is to defeat all candidates who are even mildly liberal, smash the Allis-Chalmers strike, which has been in progress for a half year, frighten the middle-class allies of labor, and send the whole labor and progressive movement scurrying into ignominious holes. Chief targets of the drive are the Allis-Chalmers strikers and Edmund V. Bobrowicz, Democratic candidate in the Fourth Congressional district. Bobrowicz, a former tannery worker who is now international representative of the CIO Fur and Leather Workers Union, is a highly personable and dynamic candidate. Only twenty-seven-years old, this veteran of World War II won the primary contest from the reactionary Democratic incumbent, Thad Wasiliewski, who nevertheless, is continuing to run as an "independent." The Republican nominee is John Brophy, ex-Socialist and former member of the defunct LaFollette Progressive Party.

In an overwhelmingly Democratic and working-class district Bobrowicz's election was virtually assured till several weeks ago when the Republican Party, working, it seems likely, with J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, decided on a piece of business in an effort to stampede the voters into the GOP corral. The Republican Milwaukee *Journal*, which once acquired an aura of integrity through its support of Wendell Willkie, published a story that Bobrowicz was a member of the Communist Party. Hearst's *Sentinel* added its own variations to the fabrication and combined it with an assault on the Allis-Chalmers strikers and an "expose" of the Communist Party. "Stalin Over Wisconsin" shrieked an edtorial, appropriately illustrated, in the September 23 issue of the *Sentinel*. The frenzied recklessness of this campaign may be gathered from the fact that the *Sentinel* even exposed as a "fellow-traveller" Leonard W. Galbrecht, a Republican candidate for the state senate and no mean Red-baiter himself.

Against Bobrowicz were mobilized all the retainers of reaction, including the Catholic hierarchy, despite the fact that the candidate is himself a Catholic and has been active in Church affairs. Heavy pressure was brought to bear on the local, state and national leadership of the Democratic Party, as well as the CIO Political Action Committee, to repudiate Bobrowicz. Finally the Democratic chieftains succumbed. Among those who disavowed Bobrowicz were, in addition to the machine politicians, Howard J. McMurray, Democratic candidate for US senator, and Rep. Andrew Biemiller, who is seeking reelection. Both these men are facing uphill battles and the chief effect of their repudiation has been to reduce their own chances of election and weaken the entire Democratic ticket.

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Illustration by Alexander Dobkin for "I Hear the People Singing." International Publishers.

CIO-PAC, on the other hand, reaffirmed its support of Bobrowicz and the slate it had previously endorsed—which, incidentally, includes a Republican, the former Progressive, Rep. Merlin Hull. The Communists, naturally, were not among those who ran for cover. Besides joining with the rest of the progressive movement in a common front against Republican reaction, they have put forward two candidates of their own: Sigmund G. Eisenscher for governor and Owen N. Lambert for the state assembly.

As for Bobrowicz, he has not contented himself with affirming the simple truth that he is not a member of the Communist Party. He has hit back at the reactionaries who have tried to make Communism the issue and challenged them to debate the real issues: homes and adequate school facilities for veterans; action against the meat trusts; firm price control; more hospitals and better medical care; improved social security; abolition of the poll tax; taxation based on ability to pay; food for the starving of Europe. And he has said: "I will never let up in my fight to maintain peace and to return to the Roosevelt policy of Big Three unity as the only guarantee to peace."

Perhaps there will be an appropriate payoff of November 5. For despite the anti-Red fanfare, and the supine behavior of the Democratic leaders, the betting gentry are quoting odds of five to four that Bobrowicz will win.

COLORADO is something else again. The famed climate of Denver is more than physical: politically the atmosphere is bracing. Those with whom I talked—and they included trade union officials, Communist leaders, Democratic candidates, business and professional people—told me that, unlike the situation in most other states, the election outlook in Colorado is better than in '44. Of course, one might reply, it couldn't very well be worse: all four incumbent Congressmen are Republicans of the orthodox faith; the two US senators (who unfortunately do not have to face the voters this year) are the affable isolationist and full-time reactionary, the GOP's Eugene D. Millikan, and the tory Democrat, Edward C. Johnson; and the state administration is Republican.

The fact is, however, that the Republicans are worried and their virtual political monopoly is in jeopardy. Governor Vivian's record has been so bad that his own party has tossed him to the wolves and nominated in his place Leon Lavington, now state auditor. But even the Scripps-Howard *Rocky Mountain News* concedes that there is "a strong trend for W. Lee Knous, Democratic gubernatorial nominee" and that Knous may win. He is being backed by the AFL, the CIO, the railroad brotherhoods, the Rocky Mountain Council for Social Action, which is the regional affiliate of the National Citizens Political Action Committee and is influential among middle-class elements, and by other progressive groups.

Chief interest in the Congressional race centers around the contest in Denver between the Democratic candidate, John A. Carroll, and the GOP incumbent, Rep. Dean Gillespie. Carroll's nomination in the primary by a two to one vote over a Red-baiting opponent marked an important victory for the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party and for the labor and progressive movement of Denver. In fact, labor—AFL, CIO and the railroad brotherhoods—played the decisive role in the Carroll nomination and is the driving force in the home-stretch battle that will decide the outcome on November 5. Another important contest is in the Second District where Frank Safranek, former state president of the National Farmers Union, is the Democratic candidate against Rep. William S. Hill, pet of the Great Western Sugar Beet Co. Hill carries the endorsement of Gerald L. K. Smith and his fascist aide, Rev. Harvey Springer.

The Republican Party in Colorado is of course receiving generous checks and active political support from the big corporations that exploit the state's coal, sugar beet, oil and metals industries. The Democratic Party, as in most states, is a Joseph's coat of many colors. It has not been free of its own big business incubus in the shape of the Adams banking family. In recent years, however, progressive influences, funneled through the labor movement and the Roosevelt policies, have been growing. At the 1944 Democratic convention the Colorado delegation was among those that supported Henry A. Wallace for the Vice-Presidential nomination. Today the state organization is in the hands of men who are trying to maintain a semblance of unity and to reconcile the Wallace and Truman

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trends—middle-of-the-roaders like Eugene Cervi, state chairman, and Barney Whatley, national committeeman. Such candidates as Carroll and Safranek, however, represent the Roosevelt-Wallace outlook and are close to the labor movement. In addition, there are the Young Democrats, who endorsed Wallace's recent foreign policy speech and invited him to speak in Colorado.

The Communist Party of Colorado is a small but vigorous organization with a tradition of heroic trail-blazing among the working people of the state. My impression is that the relations of the Communists to other progressive group are more "normal" in this state than in most others. For example, Arthur Bary, chairman of the party, is active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and heads its publicity committee. The Communists have two candidates of their own for the state legislature who are helping to illuminate immediate issues as well as to project the socialist goal for our nation. They are a Mexican, Robert Trujillo (Mexicans are the largest national minority in Colorado), who was a leader of the unemployed movement of the Thirties, and a Negro, Robert Paul, a member of the NAACP executive board.

A new anti-monopoly party? I found a good deal of sentiment for it among progressives. The coalition developing in the election is planting the seed, but in this state, as in others, it will take a lot of hard ploughing in the months to come if more than frail shoots are to come out of the soil.

No picture of the progressive movement of Colorado would be complete without including *Challenge*,

Dobkin.

the bright, new people's weekly which first chilled the spines of the tory citizenry about a half year ago. It is edited by one of the best labor journalists in the business, Cosy (technically Graham) Dolan, former editor of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers union paper, and our own Virginia Gardner does a regular Washington column. Slight, bald and sharp-faced, Dolan, who is a World War II vet, is a Democratic candidate for the legislature in a traditionally Republican district. Some dozen years ago I edited an auto workers' paper in Detroit, and so I have a soft spot for such militant regional papers as *Challenge*, the Chicago *Star* and the Seattle *New World*. Looking back on the old days, I am filled with wonder at the technical advances they have made.

In Denver I also met my friend Charlie Gwynn, a big ex-coal miner from Ohio, and his wife Rae, who is as tiny as he is tall. I got to know this tough, big-hearted American working man back in 1930 when he, Sender Garlin and I spent the greater part of the summer recuperating together from assorted collisions with the class struggle.

In Colorado one enters the land of the labor saga—of Big Bill Haywood, who died a Communist, of Cripple Creek and the Ludlow Massacre. Later, in 1927, there was another heartbreaking coal strike in Colorado, and I recall listening at a mass meeting in New York to the blazing words of a nineteen-year-old mine girl, Milka Sablich, who had sprung up as a leader of the strike, a young Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in the making. I've always wondered what happened to that girl. Those were the bare-knuckle days of the class struggle, when the labor movement was weak and strikes were slugging-matches that too often ended in agonized defeat for the workers. We have come a long way since then: labor is a power in the land and has won allies (though not enough) among the city middle classes and (though far too few) among the farmers. Today the enemy, monopoly capital, is the same, only bigger, more cunning, more dangerous. But the people too have greater strength. Many forces conspire to overwhelm that strength with apathy, but we must rouse it for November 5 and for the fight for progress, peace and plenty.

We are all of us writing the saga of our own day.

portside patter

by BILL RICHARDS

With the black market made legal we will now have meat by fair means or fowl.

●

Americans now fondly recall the good old pre-war days when the complaint was "All That Meat and No Potatoes."

●

Representative O'Konski blames the current shortages on Communist plotting. With the meat famine still in full swing the public isn't going to be satisfied with a Red herring.

●

The tanners expect the meat scarcity to create a shortage of shoes. The cattlemen, however, are more concerned with getting Democratic hides.

●

A spokesman for the British government has declared that Franco "represents a thoroughly unpalatable and repugnant regime." Maybe Ernie "Palestine" Bevin resents the competition.

●

De Gaulle continues to maintain political aloofness. The General has reached the point where he is too much for even the French constitution.

●

Goering, by taking potassium cyanide, became the fourth Nazi bigwig to die by poison. Goebbels, it will the remembered, swallowed some of his own propaganda.

●

MGM's latest picture, "The Yearling," is slated for a New York opening. In line with recent developments admission will probably be $1.50 a pound.

●

These days GOP seems to stand for Gouging On Prices.

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CALM MEN IN A GALE

An Editorial by JOSEPH NORTH

DEAR CHRIS: So, we meet again. It was good running into you that way, under the Wrigley sign on Broadway. Last time we saw each other you were engineer on a convoy freighter and I'll never forget the time you walked in during that February North Atlantic storm along Dead Man's Lane—wasn't that what you called it, where the subs clustered off the British coast? Word blew around that the subs were chasing us in the midst of the gale. And then something went wrong in the engine-room. They stampeded you down to fix it. And you did, just in time. I remember that white look about the gills when you returned to the messroom, and you didn't talk about it. I remember your calm in that storm; it worked magic on the dozen jittery landlubbers you had for passengers.

Well, when we met on Broadway the other night, you told me you were about to ship out, and you'd like to hear what's going on in our dear America. I promised I'd write, because I never forgot the talks we had aboard ship, your interest in politics. I'll write, if you'll take the time out to reply. We didn't get a chance to get down to brass tacks the other day, so I'll try in this letter to tell you a few things, but promise to send me your reactions.

Well, Chris, it's brisk weather. The gale's blowing and there's something wrong in the engine-room. We need a lot of folk like you, calm, going about fixing things up. Without hysteria. You asked about the new Liberty League setup. I began saying this was all of a pattern when we were interrupted and we didn't get around to it again. The pattern I started to describe isn't new. The old classic.

You remember I was going over to London to report the birth of the World Federation of Trade Unions and I remember your intense interest. I remember the crew asked me to give a little talk on the conference and they passed a resolution to send Joe Curran in London, backing the WFTU. Remember, the convoy was late getting in. The conference started, and that announcer on BBC said it had split up the middle, and you and the men yelled "The hell you say." You didn't believe him, you felt it would work out successfully, and you were dead right. It did. Well, that WFTU, some seventy million strong today, is part of the vast positive legacy left the world by the millions who died in the war. On the world scale democracy has emerged strengthened from the war; reaction, imperialism, is weaker in relation. Hence the frantic counterattack by those who regret the hangings in that basketball court in Nuremburg the other day. Taft (you saw his tearful condolences), Hoover, Vandenberg, the du Ponts, General Motors, the whole kit and caboodle of them, have a grand strategy. They're charging on many fronts. Your wireless must have indicated how their men—Byrnes and Vandenberg—operated at Paris. Well, their opposite numbers on the home front aren't twiddling their thumbs. They've pooled their energies to manufacture chaos. We may be short on autos, refrigerators, meat and all the rest, but boy, we're long on chaos. That's the big product the NAM is manufacturing this year. Chaos, Inc., you might call it.

But it's organized chaos, well-planned. Seems contradictory, doesn't it? Organized chaos. But that's what it is, right down the line. Get the people mad, get them confused, snafu up the works, blame it on your political opponents, mobilize the press and radio, din it into the people's ears, and figure it'll pay big dividends in the polling booths November 5. So big business, which owns the GOP hide, horn and hair, manufactures shortages; the Meat Institute held the cattle home on the range; the employers refuse to deal with the men on current strikes, the GOP-tory Democrat coalition in Congress wrecked price control, and the people are told this isn't the dear old GOP's fault. They're not the party in power, their man Reece says, etc., etc. You get the picture.

The GOP's slick advertising boys get out the slogan "Had Enough? Vote Republican." Pretty smart? But that's not all. The cherry has to be added on this arsenic-flavored cream puff. It's Red-baiting. Build the Communist up into a bogey-man, dress him in whiskers, plant a bomb in his hand, scare the babies with him, then yell that every man who isn't a tory is a Communist. Every move against chaos is "Communism"; every progressive, every liberal, is Communist. Old stuff? Sure, Hitler used it to win power; hell, the tories used it way back in revolutionary days when every genuine democrat from Jefferson to Paine was an "agent of Paris." In the twentieth century it's "agent of Moscow." Even Rep. Wright Patman (D., Tex.) is beginning to see that. He charged that the men behind American Action, Inc., were trying to do in the US what Hitler did in Germany. He described them as "wealthy industrialists seeking the defeat of Congressmen they can't control. America's fascists seeking to preserve property rights and ignoring human rights."

THAT's the pattern. And in recent days we saw the US Chamber of Commerce, the Legion kingmakers, both Hoovers, Matthew Woll, Bill Green and every mouthpiece for reaction busily weaving it. In my particular neck of the woods they've organized the American Writers Association, an assortment of literary highwaymen from Clarence Budington Kelland to Eugene Lyons, to blackjack America's literature.

Everything that can crawl is mobilized, and they've got that dreary worm Louis Budenz touring the country, doing a Jan Valtin job. There's nothing dearer to du Pont's heart than a renegade. Remember how fascism made use of the French traitor Jacques Doriot? Well, that Doriot type is at a high premium. They get well-paid jobs at Fordham, get their pictures in the papers with prayerful hands and upturned eyes, and they are shot around the country with the Now-I've-seen-the-Light refrain. You know the words to that song: "Moscow control"—"Communist Internationale"—etc., etc. Play it hard, boys, elections only a few weeks away. Hell, the British Tories did this in the famous Zinoviev forgery episode was back in 1924. Money buys a lot—from atom bombs to worms. And they're all working for the boys in the counting-room.

But money doesn't buy everything. There aren't enough gold dollars in the world to seduce the whole people. The foresighted are fighting back. They reject a police state established in America, don't want a government run by

(Continued on page 30)

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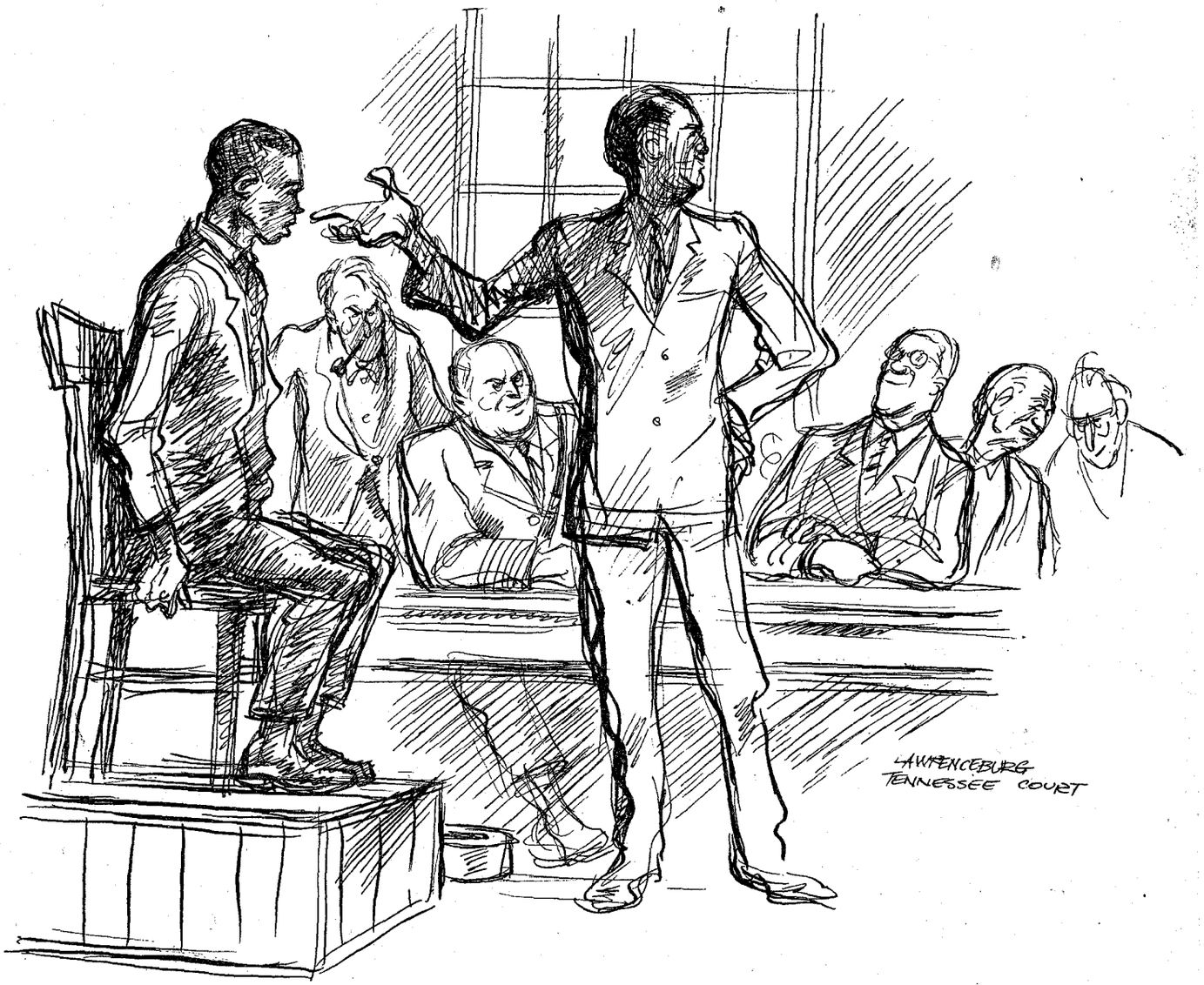

CHALK UP A SCORE FOR DEMOCRACY

Jim Crow suffered a stunning defeat in the courthouse of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. The story began one terror-ridden day and night in Columbia.

By HARRY RAYMOND

Illustrated by Oliver W. Harrington.

Not since 1861, when good men of the town, which nestles in the heart of the pro-slave Confederacy, arose militantly to oppose the Confederacy, had such a momentous decision been made in Lawrenceburg, Tenn.

On Aug. 13, 1946, the citizenry of the town and surrounding Lawrence County had the problem dropped squarely in its lap. Twenty-five Negroes from Columbia, in adjoining Maury County, were hailed into Circuit Court. They were charged with standing armed against a white lynch mob on February 25, firing shots in a dark, terror-ridden Jim Crow street, and wounding four police officers. Prosecutor Paul Bumpus, speaking kind words for the Ku Klux Klan, flourished an indictment accusing the Negroes of "attempt to commit murder." He called them "outlaws," "insurrectionists." He demanded their immurement "behind bars where they will be safe for many years."

This was a mighty big order for Lawrence County. Most residents, farmers busy with tobacco, hay, sorghum and cotton, told Bumpus to take the case back to Maury County or try it in Nashville, as proposed by attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. Bumpus stood his ground. The farmers continued to resent it, but after five weeks an all-white jury was in the box. The evidence was in after two more weeks. And on October 4, after two

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hours' deliberation, the jury handed Judge Joe M. Ingram the verdict, setting free twenty-three defendants, including the principals. It was a stunning defeat for white supremacy.

But like many great democratic victories, the verdict of the Lawrenceburg jury was not perfect, not 100 percent. Robert Gentry and John McKivins, defendants, although not near the scene of the shooting, were found "guilty" and sentenced to twenty-one years in the Tennessee State Penitentiary. So while the Columbia Negroes, their three able lawyers and their hundreds of thousands of friends throughout America chalk up one big score for democracy, a new battle moves into the Tennessee Supreme Court to free Gentry and McKivins.

IT WAS ten o'clock Monday morning, February 25. The sun was shining brightly on Columbia's courthouse square. People were going about their daily tasks in an orderly manner. Among the early shoppers walked Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, a Negro woman, proudly holding the arm of her nineteen-year-old son Jimmie, recently discharged from the Navy. Jimmie had seen long months of battle service. The Stephensons spoke to friends as they walked to the Casner-Knott store to ask about a radio left there for repair.

Will Fleming, white radio repairman, produced the radio. But on examination Mrs. Stephenson discovered the repair job was incomplete. Fleming doubled the price, however, and told Mrs. Stephenson she could "take it or leave it." She declared Fleming had cheated her, picked up the radio and said she would take it to another shop. Fleming struck Mrs. Stephenson. Then he kicked her. James rushed to protect his mother—Fleming was then outside the store. James struck him with his fist. Fleming fell against a plate glass window, breaking it, a splinter of glass cutting him slightly.

The story of the day and night of terror that followed this incident was recited from the witness stand during the long Lawrenceburg trial.

Mrs. Hannah Peppers, mother of Mrs. Stephenson, told the jury how her daughter and grandson were dragged to jail after being beaten by policemen.

"I learned white people had jumped on them," she declared. "I went down to the jail and asked Sheriff Underwood if I could pay them out. At first he wouldn't let me see them. Then he let me see them, peeping through iron bars. He said I'd have to put up bond. Then I went to see Mr. Julius Blair." Seventy-six-year-old Julius Blair, leader of the Columbia Negro community, was chief defendant in the Lawrenceburg trial.

Dr. Leon A. Ransom, outstanding Negro attorney and former dean of Howard University, questioned Grandmother Peppers on the stand. She described how she crossed the square on her way to Blair's drugstore on East Eighth St.

Q. Did you hear anything on the square to alarm you about the safety of your daughter and grandson?

A. In crossing the square I saw some white men gathered around. I heard one say, "We're going to take those two niggers out of jail and hang them."

Q. How were the white men gathered?

A. They were bunched off around the square.

Q. State whether that conversation alarmed you.

A. It unnerved me, and I just brushed right on and went to see Julius Blair.

Q. What did you say to Mr. Blair?

A. I said: "Mr. Blair, I came down to see you. They have my children in jail. I want you to make bond." He said: "What did they do?" Then he kind of hesitated. I said I heard some kind of remark about going to hang them. He said: "I'll see about it." He went and took them out.

Sheriff Underwood, a state witness, cross-examined by Dr. Z. Alexander Looby, chief defense counsel, told how a mob of white men came to the jail, kicked the door and demanded the Stephensons shortly after Blair took them out.

Q. When was it the mob came to the jail?

A. They came after dark.

Q. What did you do?

A. I got a machinegun before I came to the door.

The sheriff admitted he later went to the square and heard there was "some feeling" among the whites about the Stephensons.

Six police witnesses testified they saw seventy-five Negroes armed with shotguns and hunting rifles in the "Mink Slide" Negro business district after the Stephensons were released. James Morton, undertaker and one of the defendants, was quoted as saying: "We'll defend Jimmie Stephenson to the last man." Teen-aged Negro school children were snatched from their classes by highway patrolmen, brought to court as veritable prisoners and put on the stand by the prosecutor to testify about the activities of James T. Bellanfant, school bus driver, war veteran and defendant. Bellanfant's "crime," according to the prosecutor, was a warning of the lynch mob he relayed through the children to their parents. He urged the children to tell their fathers and other men to rally on "Mink Slide" in defense of young Stephenson.

Bellanfant was also charged with carrying a machinegun on the night of the "trouble." And it was Bellanfant who, with Sol Blair—also a defendant—and two others, drove over back roads in three different cars through the dark with Jimmie Stephenson to Nashville. Jimmie was placed on a Chicago-bound train at 2 A.M., February 26. A lynching had been averted.

According to evidence, the policemen were wounded while Sol Blair and Bellanfant were speeding to Nashville with Stephenson.

INSTEAD of breaking up the white mob, the cops moved into the darkened, terrorized Negro district.

Will Wilsford, a policeman struck

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by buckshot, said he entered "Mink Slide" and heard someone holler, "Halt."

Q. Do you know who hollered?

A. No. The lights were out. Then somebody hollered, "Fire." And guns went off.

Q. How many guns fired?

A. Too many for me to count.

Q. Were they all of the same calibre?

A. Some were louder than others. They sounded like pistols, rifles and shotguns.

Wilsford testified that neither he nor the other officers knew who fired the guns.

Throughout the trial the judge expressed strong hostility to defense counsel, the defendants and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, which financed and directed the defense.

Judge Ingram denied the defense permission to offer testimony showing involvement of present Columbia officials in the lynching of Henry Choate in 1927, and Cordie Cheek in 1933. This was offered to reveal the state of mind of the Negro community when the mob sought Stephenson. Maurice M. Weaver, lone white attorney for the defense and former Chattanooga CIO counsel, later told the jury the Negroes had no reason to trust Columbia officials to aid them against lynchers. The Negroes, he said, knew some of these officials had marched with mobs on other occasions.

During the long days of examination of prospective jurors, Judge Ingram refused to allow defense counsel to ask questions concerning race prejudice, law and the Ku Klux Klan. Former Klan members and men with avowed prejudice against Negroes were qualified for jury service by the court. Most all of the defense peremptory challenges were used to keep such men from the jury. A late appearance in court by Dr. Ransom and Weaver, due to a tire blowout, brought down the biased wrath of the court on the two lawyers. Judge Ingram fined them twenty-five dollars each for contempt of court.

TENSEST moment of the trial came when Weaver clashed with blustering Lynn Bomar, State Highway Patrol Chief and former Vanderbilt all-American football end. By piercing cross-examination, Weaver exposed Bomar as the Nazi-like brute who led the raid on the Negro community on February 26. Bomar readily admitted he violated every constitutional right when he broke into stores and homes without warrants and shot up the Negro business district.

"And I'd do it again," bellowed Bomar. Highway patrolmen working under his orders shot James Johnson and William Gordon, Negro prisoners, to death in the Maury County Jail on February 28. Bomar boasted of his "toughness" on the witness stand. He told how he "stood on the neck" of one Negro and "kicked another" while making an arrest.

But it was General Bumpus' final address to the jury, I think, that swung the jury closer to the defense theory of the case. His was the violent speech of an American fascist, sprinkled with open anti-Semitic abuse and veiled demands that white supremacy be upheld. He denounced persons supporting the defense as "long-nosed men and short-chinned women." He demanded they "take their beaks from out our hearts." He railed against newspapermen who were in the court reporting the case. He didn't like their stories, and called the writers "lousy pimps and punks," "Stinkskys, Russkys and Eleanorskys." He suggested it would be a good idea to hang some of them. He linked this with a cry for conviction of all twenty-five defendants.

It is possible that, not having read any of the newspaper stories the prosecutor was denouncing so vaguely but loudly, members of the jury thought he was unjustly pouring his vitriol on the

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elderly Julius Blair and other defendants, whom witnesses for both state and defense had declared to be honest, peaceful and upstanding American citizens. At any rate, Bumpus had the last word. Perhaps it was too incredible for the seven farmers, the two carpenters, the chemical worker, the country storekeeper and sawmill operator — the Lawrence County men who made up the jury. They did not appear to be ready to hang any of the prosecutor's enemies when they brought in the verdict. Then Bumpus looked as if he wanted to hang the jury.

IT HAS long been a tradition in Lawrence County for men to rise up against people like Bumpus. In 1862, when General Ulysses S. Grant was directing the Battle of Shiloh from a tent pitched sixty miles from Lawrenceburg, he found vigorous support for the Union cause among the local citizenry. One of the staunchest Civil War Unionist organizations in Tennessee had its center in Lawrenceburg. Old-timers there still boast how the anti-Confederates, their ancestors, supported Lincoln in 1861 and expressed open hostility to Jefferson Davis. Lawrenceburg Unionists cooperated with federal troops in the great Battle of Franklin, sixty-three miles to the north, where on Nov. 30, 1864, six Confederate brigadier generals were slain.

Jim Crow still hovers over Lawrence County. There are communities in the county where Negroes are not permitted to live. But there is still less race hatred there than in Nassau County, New York. And race-haters are being fought today in Lawrenceburg by such men as Charles and Jim Crawford, owners and publishers of the county's lone weekly paper, the *Democrat-Union*. The Crawfords are linotypers who write their progressive editorials directly on the typesetting machine. Mother Crawford folds the papers and prepares them for mailing. She proudly recalls how her husband, the late Charles Crawford, Sr., founder of the paper, defiantly fought the Ku Klux Klan and helped bring about its dissolution in the county. Charlie and Jim, she says, are "chips off the old block."

Another Lawrenceburg leader is the elderly Senator C. C. Kelly. This bearded and dignified gentleman once stood alone on the courthouse steps, hunting rifle in hand, facing a rampaging mob of Klansmen. The Klan came out that day to whip a man. Kelly ordered them to disperse and offered a hundred dollars to the first Klansman who dared to cross his threshold. The mob broke up and nobody came to Kelly's house to collect the hundred dollars.

Kelly, who served several terms in the state legislature, holds no public office. But he is active in politics, rallying a sizable vote against the reactionary Crump machine. There is a strong movement in Lawrence County to draft Kelly to make another race for the State Senate.

Standing by the side of the venerable Kelly in the fight for a progressive and prosperous South is another former state legislator and leader of the anti-Crump faction, Senator Tom Locke. Widely known and respected by farmers and workmen throughout the county as spokesman for the common man, Senator Locke is already mapping a campaign to retire Judge Ingram and Attorney General Bumpus from public life. He is a deadly foe of Red-baiters, Jew-baiters and Negro-haters. The doors of the old Locke home are always open to progressive gatherings. The charming Mrs. Locke explains: "We're not fancy people, but just plain country working folks." They are the kind of people who are building a new South.

I never personally knew any members of the jury that brought in the epochal verdict. But I do know they are good, plain country working folks like the Crawfords, Senator Kelly and the Lockes. They erred in not freeing Gentry and McKivins. And I feel certain that on reflection they will realize their mistake and fight with the rest of us for the freedom of the two innocent Negroes. That fight must not be relaxed for a moment.

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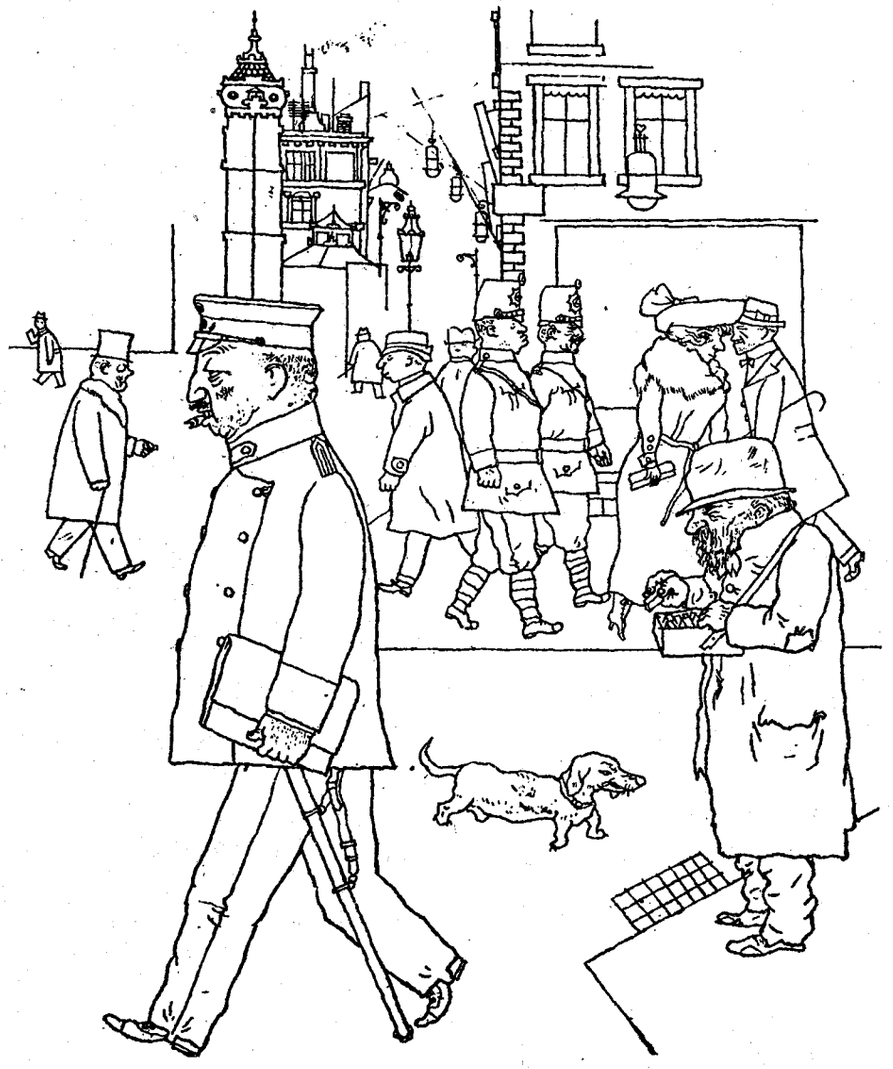
THE SHAPE OF WORLD POLITICS

What are the new factors determining the main trends of international affairs in the postwar period? The views of a noted Soviet economist.

By EUGENE VARGA

THIS essay does not propose to analyze the causes of the Second World War. I shall limit myself to mention of the fact that the Second World War differed from the first in that it did not begin between countries similar in type. On one side stood the fascist aggressors and on the other the democratic countries while on the democratic side there were both highly developed capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. Obviously this circumstance was bound to have a tremendous effect on the whole domestic and foreign policy of the capitalist countries.

The fact that the Soviet Union and highly-developed capitalist countries were together in one group of powers fighting against the fascist aggressors meant that the struggle between the two systems in the democratic camp eased up temporarily, was suspended, although this, of course, did not mean the end of the struggle. At the same time the struggle between the two systems entered its sharpest phase when the fascist aggressors attacked the Soviet Union. The allies helped the Soviet Union but it cannot be said that in doing so they had forgotten the difference in social systems. One example of this is the manner in which the atomic bomb was kept secret. In the sphere of domestic politics the Communist Parties of the countries in the democratic camp, Great Britain, America, etc., in view of the just nature of the war, helped their governments against the fascists, urged them to open the second front, which was opposed by the reactionary elements in the allied countries. They defended their people from the danger of German fascism.



From "In the Shadow, 1917," by George Grosz. AAA Gallery.

It goes without saying that the Anglo-American contradictions—the major contradictions between the imperialists—were relegated to the background while the contradictions between the democratic countries and the fascist aggressors came into the foreground. The Anglo-American contradictions did not disappear, however, and even during the war the struggle between England and America continued. During the war the Americans took good care that the goods exported from Great Britain did not contain more than ten percent of those items which Great Britain obtained by lend-lease. During the war American capital tried—and not without success—to drive British capital out of the position it had held in the Latin American countries, and to obtain markets in India and the British dominions. The Americans included in their black list of firms not only purely Argentine firms but also enterprises in which British capital played a part. In the Middle East the struggle for oil also continued during the war.

After this war the struggle for the preservation of the capitalist system once more assumed the proportions of a major problem in the domestic policy of the capitalist countries, just as it had after the First World War. The bourgeoisie is scared by the general leftward trend in the working-class

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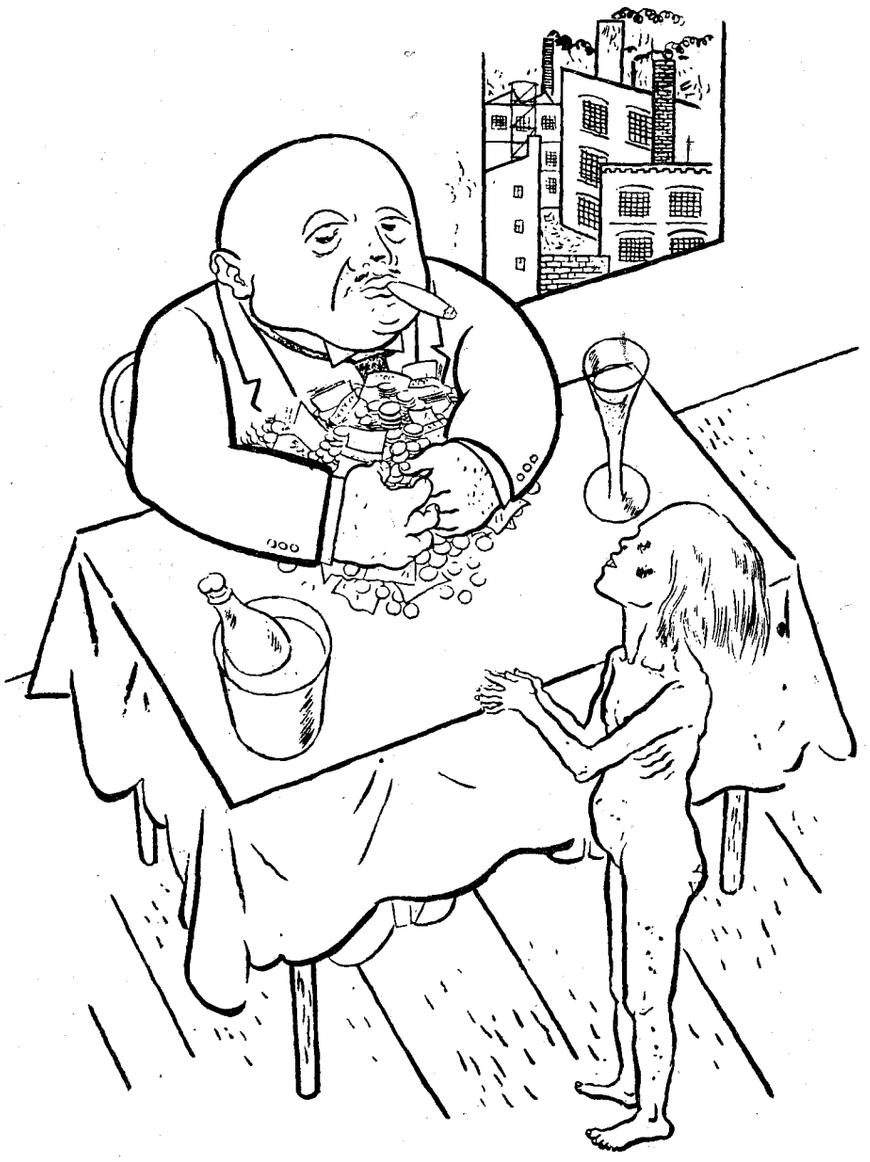
movement of the whole world since the war. The leftward trend has developed to varying degrees and takes different forms in different countries. If we examine such leading capitalist countries as Great Britain and the US we see that the leftward trend took the form primarily of a strengthening of the reformist labor movement. In Great Britain the Labor Party won a victory in the parliamentary elections. In the US there have been mass strikes and the trade union movement has becomes stronger. Although the Communist Parties of these countries have grown, they are still not an important factor in domestic politics. The capitalist system in these countries was not shaken as a result of the war. The reason for this is clear. The bourgeoisie of those countries that emerged victorious from the war was not discredited, the state apparatus remained unchanged and the army was even increased in strength as compared with the pre-war army. One of the characteristic features of postwar policy is the increased militarism of the Anglo-Saxon countries, especially of the US, which has become the most powerful military state in the capitalist world.

THE situation is quite different in in the countries on the European continent. The bourgeoisie of these countries has been discredited. Within the life span of one generation the peoples of the countries in continental Europe have experienced two wars. Now the people are hungry; naturally it is primarily the industrial workers, intellectuals, the townspeople, who suffer hunger and not the bourgeoisie and well-to-do-farmers. Under such circumstances a radical leftward swing of the working class and the working people in general was inevitable. Another factor which must be added to this is the marked polarization which took place in capitalist society during the war. Millions of middle-class people, craftsmen, shop-keepers, lower bourgeois ranks, lost their independence during the war and became workers. Inflation during and after the war is devaluating the savings of the middle classes. The tendency towards polarization, the formation of two camps, the big bourgeoisie and its immediate adherents on the one hand and the workers, clerks, intellectuals—those who possess no property—on the other, is a very strong one in modern society. This tendency was reflected in the defeat of typical middle-class parties in town and country, as, for example, the Radical Socialists in France and the Liberals in Great Britain.



"The Tigers and Leopards Do Feed Their Young," by George Grosz.

The bourgeoisie of the countries that suffered German occupation was discredited to a greater extent than others because of the fact that in the main the bigger bourgeoisie of France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary collaborated with the fascist occupants. There were, of course, isolated exceptions: there were capitalists in all countries who took part in the resistance movement. In general, however, the bourgeoisie collaborated with the occupants and this was, in addition to the military defeat, the chief factor of its discrediting.

Apart from this, however, there are a number of important new political factors which distinguish the present situation from that obtaining after the First World War. One of these factors is the changed role of the Communist Parties of Europe.

The Communist Parties of Europe achieved great popularity because of the leading part they played in the organization of the resistance movement in all European countries. "The growth of the influence of the Communist Parties," said Stalin in an interview with a *Pravda* correspondent on March 16, 1946, concerning Churchill's speech, "cannot be regarded as fortuitous. It is a perfectly normal phenomenon. The influence of the Communists has grown because in the trying years of fascist domination in Europe the Communists showed themselves to be reliable, courageous, self-sacrificing fighters

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against the fascist regime and for the freedom of the people."

It is enough to examine only the data of the elections that have taken place in the European countries since the war to convince ourselves of the tremendous growth of Communist Party influence in Europe. In France the Communist Party is almost the strongest political party in the country: at the elections on Oct. 21, 1945, and July 2, 1946, the Communists obtained over 5,000,000 votes. In Italy the Communist Party numbers some 2,000,000 members and is one of the leading political parties in the country. The influence of the Communists has increased very considerably in Holland, Belgium, Norway and Luxembourg. In Czechoslovakia the Communists polled 2,700,000 votes and have become the strongest party in the country. In Hungary 800,000 people voted for the Communist Party. In almost all the countries of continental Europe the Communists are participating in the government and are playing a leading part in restoring the economy of their countries. Lastly, outstanding achievements have been made by the Communist Parties of Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, where they are the leading force in the People's and Homeland Fronts.

In all those countries which suffered Hitlerite occupation and where the big bourgeoisie collaborated with the occupants the resistance movement was inevitably directed both against the occupants and against the big bourgeoisie of the country concerned. The Communists were successful because of the policies which their parties are now pursuing in all countries and which take into consideration the experiences of the First World War. The Communist Parties defend the interests of all working people—factory and office workers, peasants and intellectuals. Such a policy makes impossible the old reactionary tactics of isolating Communists from the masses.

The second new factor which distinguishes the present situation from that obtaining after the First World War is the radical change in the position of the Soviet Union and its role in world politics. The growth of the influence and prestige of the USSR as a world power is something that even the enemies of that country have had to admit.

Since the end of the Second World War the main line in the domestic and foreign policy of the capitalist countries is once more, as it was after the First World War, the defense of the capitalist system.

It must be mentioned that this line was followed by Great Britain while the war was still in progress. Reactionary exile bourgeois governments found asylum in Great Britain. Preparatory work was carried out to enable them to return to their countries after liberation as the lawful bourgeois rulers.

After the liberation of a number of West European countries the question was raised of disarming the Partisans and of the possibility of exluding the leaders of the resistance movement from the newly-formed governments. Naturally it is much more difficult today than it was after the First World War openly to defend the capitalist system in the form in which it existed before the war. It is true that in America there are some influential groups and individuals, like Eric Johnson, Senator Vandenberg and those behind them, who preach a return to pre-war capitalism. These, however, are exceptions. In general it is everywhere admitted that a profound reform of the capitalist system is essential; everywhere there are ideological tendencies such as the striving for planned economy under capitalism, the introduction of social insurance, the increase of state capitalism, etc.

In Great Britain, as we know, a start has been made on the nationalization of some of the more important branches of industry. The very fact that the bourgeoisie itself is forced to begin nationalizing the means of production is an admission that the system of private ownership is already outmoded. Naturally there is a great difference between nationalization in Great Britain and in those countries of Eastern Europe that might be called countries with a new type of democracy. The remnants of feudalism in these countries in the shape of large landed estates have been abolished, a considerable part of the means of production has become state property and the state itself is not an apparatus of the rich for the suppression of the working people but operates in the interests of the latter.

In countries of the old type of democracy, such as Great Britain nationalization does not bring any changes to the distribution of the national wealth and the national income because the owners are receiving compensation which is about equal to their former incomes. In the new type of democratic countries, on the contrary, nationalization means profound changes in the distribution of the national income at the expense of the former owners of the nationalized means of production.

Prof. Varga is among the most distinguished of Soviet economists. His article, the concluding sections of which will appear next week, is abridged from issue six (1946) of the journal "World Economy and World Politics."

A HERO TELLS THE GLORIOUS STORY TO A LADY

A hero came home yesterday.
A lady asked him what he thought of war.

He bought a piece of penny chalk

And he wrote the first names of sixty men
On the stone pavement.

Then he wrote the names of sixty women
Alongside of them.

And he began to write the names of children
But the chalk was all used up

And trying to finish the first child's name,
He wrote with his fingers

And the blood came,

Running on the pavement in small rivers
That soon covered all the names
So they could not be seen.

ALEX AUSTIN.

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JERICHO, USA

"Sergeant Ashford said later that if the captain had bitten anybody right then they'd have curled up and died of poison in an hour."

A Short Story by LLOYD L. BROWN

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any *word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.*

JOSHUA, 6:12.

GENERAL SHERMAN said it. No, not that business about war, but about how if he had a ranch in Texas and a half-acre in hell he'd sell the ranch, build a house on the lot and move right in with the devil.

Well, that particular day at the Air Base in west Texas was one of those 110-degrees-in-the-shade scorchers when you'd want to move, too—anywhere.

For miles around the khaki-colored land lay flat as a GI blanket. The only thing green was a straggling line of cottonwoods cooling their roots in the muddy banks of a nearby creek. Good country for short-horned cattle, long-eared jacks and B-29's.

And it *would* have to be our squadron's turn to stand Retreat. In the first hectic months of opening up the base we hadn't been bothered with the ceremonies of soldiering. But this new colonel was strictly Old Army and he liked that stuff. For our men it meant coming in from detail—motor pool, flight line, Officers' Mess—after a hard day's work, rushing to get cleaned up in Class A uniform, assembling in formation for the long roll call from Adams to Young and marching up to Base Headquarters for the lowering of the flag.

The band was usually on hand, but not this time. Just a lone bugler to sound the call and a couple of MP's in their fancy white helmet-liners, pistol belts and leggings to haul down and fold the flag in the manner prescribed by regulations.

"You might know those band guys wouldn't be out on a day like this—lucky bastids, bein' in a outfit like that." That would be Private Wilkerson in the rank behind me. Standing stiffly at attention, I couldn't look around but I knew the muffled voice. Wilkerson was always making cracks while in formation; he had a knack of being able to speak without moving his lips or a muscle on his face. Some of the guys claimed he learned that trick on a Carolina chain gang, but I think they were kidding.

As we marched back to our squadron area the five o'clock sun beat on our backs with the pressure of a full field pack. A trickle of sweat rolled down the neck of the man in front of me.

"Hold it down, Corporal Dorsey!" the voice of our CO commanded the guide of the first platoon. Then Captain Martin counted out a slower cadence, "Hup, tup, thrup, foh. . . ."

We all felt like Dorsey: hurry back and out of our bottoned-up Class A's and after supper a search for some shade to sprawl in. And some of the boys were eager to get to town where a small jump band from Kansas City was booked to play a dance at the Colored USO. I never could figure out anybody wanting to dance on a day like that, but that's how those young guys were—work all day, jitterbug all night.

Back to our recreation field and *halt!* Left *face!* At *ease!*

"You looked great today, men. I'm proud of you," the captain said. "That's what I always say: I've got a

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damn good bunch of men. I'm sure the colonel thinks so, too—I saw him looking out of his office. Good.

"Yes, men, you looked great," the captain continued, "but there's one thing I've been thinking about. I've got an idea that will really make this squadron stand out. We've got to be a singing outfit—I know all you boys are natural-born singers. Everywhere we go, you will sing—the Singing Seventy-ninth!"

"Yeah, all God's chillun can sing," Wilkerson croaked, "me, I was born singin' a spiritual." Big Boy Lightfoot, on my right, made a choking sound and changed it to a loud cough.

The CO glanced sharply at our platoon and then stepped back a few paces to get a better view of the whole formation. He beamed with his new idea. "How many of you know 'I've Been Working on the Railroad'?" he asked.

I guess everybody did, but only a half dozen hands went up. Maybe that would have ended it for the day if we'd all raised our hands, but we didn't think about that till afterward and then we didn't care.

THE captain must have sensed something wrong. A slight flush touched his sallow face. "Well, now's as good a time as any to learn it" he said sharply. "Private Johnson, do you know the song?" looking down the line to his left. Johnson sang lead in our squadron quartet.

"Yessir!" You could almost see the bending back and the snatched-off hat in that ringing "yessir." Johnson was bucking hard for corporal and he was that kind of a guy anyway.

"Fine. You'll help me lead the singing. But first I'll give the words:

"I bin workin' on de railroad,
"All de lib long day. . . ."

"Christamighty—so that's what he wants! That ol' Uncle Tom stuff . . . aint that sump'n." Wilkerson again. I knew he was going to say something.

That dialect business must have been too much for the few who had admitted knowing the song, because on the first try by the time they got to the part about "Dinah won't you blow . . ." only two voices could be heard: Johnson and the CO. They finished the song. By now Captain Martin was mad—real mad, you could see it. Sergeant Ashford said later that if the captain had bitten anybody right then they'd have curled up and died of poison in an hour.

He sounded kind of shaky when he called us to attention. "All right, you men. Maybe you'll do better if we *march* and sing. By God," his voice rising, "you'll drill till nine tonight if necessary!" He glared at his watch.

Right *face!* Fo-r-r-r-rd *march!* Then he and Johnson started up the song again. But they had quit by the time we did a column-right at the corner back of the mess hall. The KP's who were squatting in the shade of the garbage rack started talking loud and laughing so we'd notice them.

The mess sergeant was standing in the door, inevitable cigar in his teeth (why do all mess sergeants smoke cigars? I always wondered about that). I knew he'd be cussing about the chow getting cold.

Nothing then as we swung around the quarter-mile area except the *squick squick* of our shoes on the sticky tarred road. Now the guy's shirt in front of me was plastered to his back, muscles outlined by the clinging suntans.

Back around to our starting point and around the mess hall again. This time the KP's watched in silence. The mess sergeant was standing with them, arms akimbo, cigar now tilted at a belligerent angle.

"Hup, tup, thrup, foh. . . ." Back again to the assembly point and *halt!* Left *face!* But no "at ease" this time.

"All right, men. I see I'm going to have to use other measures." Defeat came hard to Captain Martin, an important man in in his home town back in Arkansas—biggest Chevvy dealer in the county.

"There'll be no passes tonight. And tomorrow night we'll do some practicing. First Sergeant, dismiss the squadron!" He turned abruptly and walked down the road in the direction of the officers' quarters.

Every eye followed him, and for a moment I almost felt sorry for our commanding officer. I'd hate to have 200 men thinking like that about me.

IT WAS two days before payday and everybody was broke, but that night the PX was crowded. I don't know where the guys dug up the money but everybody was drinking beer and the laughing was loud. Old Pop Calloway didn't know what to make of it. The biggest beer soak in the outfit—he claimed it was a mighty poor substitute for the West Virginia "mountain dew" he was raised on—Pop, for once, had more than he could handle. All the boys were setting him up.

"Now don't that beat all?" he said, showing his stubby yellowed teeth in a grin and pointing to the crowded bar. There was Staff Sergeant "Army" Lewis, the details NCO who was hard as hell on a goldbrick, buying beer for Charlie Tanner, the worst goof-off in the squadron.

And there were other things to be chewed over for weeks to come. Like how "Top Secret" Thompson, who never talked to anybody, did more talking that night than any one else. And about Corporal Alston, the Richmond school teacher who never smoked, cussed or drank and was one of the three regulars from our outfit in chapel Sundays—about how he said "Don't mind if I do" when offered a beer.

Across the road in the tarpaper barracks—all up and down the line—there was singing long after lights out. All kinds of songs: the old campfire ballads, church songs more rhythmic than righteous, all the current jukebox hits. There was our old troop-train favorite, "I'm Going To Move Way Out on the Outskirts of Town," and the latest nickel-snatcher, "Gee Baby Ain't I Good to You!" Wilkerson gave all the boys a laugh when he came into the latrine singing, in that gravel-voice of his—"I've Been Working On the Railroad."

They must have heard us all over the base because when the last refueling trucks came back the drivers said they could hear us far out on the runways—way past the officers' quarters.

BLACK CHILD IN THE PARK

The women, moving in
A little crowd,
Assemble round the child
And coo aloud.

The infant's solemn face
With care belies
The lurking panic in
His puzzled eyes.

The mother now arrives,
Confronts his foes,
Bends swiftly to the child,
Lifts him and goes.

For she remembers how
They stare in zoos
At baby elephants
And kangaroos.

DALTON TRUMBO.

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SOAP-OPERA SCIENCE

"Reaction hates the motives of science—to advance truth on all fronts." A discussion of the program of the Educational Policies Commission.

By DYSON CARTER

A SERIOUS situation is developing in our schools. The teaching of science, always haphazard, is now approaching a crisis. A showdown fight is being hastened by the appearance of a book which Dr. Franklin Bobbitt, in *The Scientific Monthly*, calls "nothing less than monstrous."

This book has the imposing title: *The Education of All American Youth*. It was prepared by the Educational Policies Commission set up by two teaching groups, the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators. The book includes a proposed curriculum of science teaching which is incredibly stupid and condemns our youth to a daily one-hour period of science, dished up largely in the form of improvised gossip.

The problems raised by this book are worth considering seriously. Not only do they directly concern every teacher and parent but they reflect a deep conflict in our profit-mad society. This article is not intended to be a thorough analysis but simply an outline of certain features of the situation.

All enlightened people admit that a background knowledge of science is absolutely essential today. Nearly all our important professions are based upon science. In recent years the vast majority of workers in industry, farming, distribution, communication, entertainment and so forth have had to acquire some skills involving specific scientific knowledge; the rapidly increasing demands of this kind were suddenly appreciated during the war, when our armed forces had to conduct basic science teaching on a vast scale. Within the past two years our top militarists, politicians and statesmen have been startled to discover that science has moved to the center of the stage, that even demagogues, let alone administrators, now cannot function very well unless they have enough intelligence and learning to grasp what scientists are doing. Within the sciences themselves a special educational crisis is maturing, as a result of which we find leading researchers and industrialists properly alarmed because not enough American youths have been trained as science specialists.

Of course no reasonable person puts forward the idea that people in general should acquire specialized scientific training. What we urgently need is an awareness of the basic functions of scientific knowledge in modern civilization. Even progressives often are ignorant of some elementary facts. An outstanding fact is this: within the past twenty-five years scientific practice has been so widely applied to all phases of

"The Pseudo-philosophers," by Josef Scharl. Nierendorf Gallery.

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life that people who have no grasp of science are in a very real sense illiterate.

On a higher level, the situation today repeats what happened in the early days of industrial capitalism. Then the majority of people in all classes were bewildered by quite simple machines, because they had not even a rudimentary knowledge of mechanics. Against strong opposition from feudal remnants the more realistic capitalists were forced to introduce compulsory education and to extend the school curricula beyond reading and writing, for only thus could the population be equipped to handle the new techniques. Nowadays tens of millions of our citizens are using and working with far more complex things and forces, which they understand hazily or not at all.

Henceforth it will be tragic for a child to come out of school unable to explain the world he must live in. What does a person know about the real, material world of today when he lacks an understanding of the basic science now used in growing and processing our foods, or in preventing and curing sickness, making the textile fibers of which our clothes are woven, operating the machines we use for travel, our communications equipment, entertainment devices, mines, power sources and the numberless processes of industry? Such a person feels baffled by the actual working of the world. Reality itself becomes vague.

One asks: with dozens of branches of science now highly developed, just how much scientific knowledge can the ordinary citizen usefully absorb? It is just this formulation of the problem which leads to extreme confusion. Although Dr. Bobbitt's critique of the Educational Policies Commission has certain shortcomings, his grasp of what he calls "layman's science" is clearly expressed.

In the first place he points out that by insisting upon the schools giving their students "specialization or nothing" our scientists have been driving science out of the classroom. Then he uses a familiar figurative picture to describe what kind of science should be taught in public and high school classes.

The young student should be regarded as a traveler in a strange, fascinating country, a "bewilderingly rich and diversified world." But this is a world of *realities*. These science realities are such things as position, form, amounts, qualities, relations, functions, forces, origins. The "tourist" in science must see the real world in many different ways, the ways of physics, chemistry, geology, geography, meteorology, biology, astronomy and so on. At each new inspection of the many-sided world he gets deeper enjoyment and satisfaction. But as for mastering the theoretical details of specialized sciences, Dr. Bobbitt rightly insists that such memorizing of academic facts makes science pale and lifeless to the young "traveler." Only when he sees all the sciences "moving under full intellectual steam" does he win a sound, useful, unforgettable understanding of working science in general, the material world of today in motion.

The EPC science-teaching program violently contradicts this approach. Briefly, here are the science topics laid down for fifteen-year-olds in Grade 10:

1. Research technique now used in sciences which are still unknown to the pupils.
2. Practical results of sciences unknown to the pupils.
3. Biographies of great scientists, stressing work in fields unknown to the pupils.
4. Impressing on the students, mostly by conversation, that the world is governed by natural laws, cause and effect.
5. Teaching fundamental principles of the sciences.

The faults in this program are fairly obvious. First: no science teaching, let alone this hodge-podge, can be carried on in the one hour per day allowed in this curriculum. Second: this is the "glamorous science" of radio school programs. I have written such scripts for the radio, abandoning that work in disgust after discovering how closely it had to be patterned (with rare exceptions) after the soap-operas. The proper emotional appeal of science can and should be found in its content and not in preposterous dramatic forms.

No one, child or adult, can gain a working knowledge of the science without first gaining a fairly broad picture of their substance—the amounts, qualities, forces, etc., dealt with by the important specialties. But the EPC program is so far removed from reality that it omits physics and biology!

Let us be specifically critical with regard to physics. Teaching the *substance* of physics, not its "laws," is an adventure in exploring the foundation of our modern world. More, physics is the foundation of all the sciences. Without it we cannot get anything but a superficial understanding of chemistry, astronomy, meteorology, geology or biology, to say nothing of subdivisions like electronics or the enormous field of industrial research. The subject matter of physics has the very highest cultural value because it represents the highest truths the human mind has so far won from the material world.

Therefore it is necessary to plan science teaching, for youths and adults, around a broad course in physics. Side trips into other fields—geophysics, astrophysics, biophysics, physical-chemistry, etc.—would round out the picture of reality and give that many-sidedness which alone imparts useful scientific understanding. It goes without saying that this general approach could be extended into our colleges, for today among advanced students of the science specialties can be found disgracefully illiterate people of the kind aptly characterized by that wisecrack of specialization: they know more and more about less and less.

The EPC program pays lip service to the teaching of "natural laws." Doing this without physics is like traveling through England with the help of a guidebook on Peru. That the world is real, that man can solve the mysteries of nature, that real truth has been won by science, that science today is proving its truths on a gigantic scale by the ultimate test of *practice*—building and running our civilization—all this will never be imparted by the classroom forums vaguely suggested by the EPC. It has to be experienced by the student's mind. Without physics he cannot possibly reach living science, and this one omission is enough to justify labelling the EPC program "monstrous."

In my opinion physics must be the basis of science teaching because physics is the all-inclusive science of the material world, its content is matter in motion. Some scientists and teachers might disagree with this. However, "fantastic" is the label any scientists would apply to the EPC's outline for teaching immature students the research techniques, applications, biographies and laboratory experiments in fields of science wholly unknown to them. I can only ascribe this to the

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influence of monopoly science propaganda, the advertising agency's bally-hoo. This fake "dramatizing" of science is poisonous. It is really a very subtle denial of science; it substitutes personal and purely fanciful thrills for the real subject matter of science. It leaves young and old with nothing but a vacuous emotional reaction: "Ain't scientists wonderful?"

One does not need to be a Marxist to appreciate that the EPC program is a deliberate sabotage of science teaching. Non-Marxist progressives assail reactionary movements in education which are led by pseudo liberals like Hutchins and Adler of the University of Chicago, with their frantic plea for a return to "the classics"—meaning a medieval, obscurantist curriculum, a denial of science. The progressives warn against the mystical thesis of reaction: that the substance of science is narrowly restricted and confined only to "technology," and that therefore we must go beyond science, for a solution to society's problems. These progressives advocate that teachers cooperate with organized labor in order to gain social awareness and a sense of their great responsibility in combatting reaction in the classroom.

But even then the problem is not quite so simple. Many scientists in their Olympian seclusion still refuse to admit that the whole population can and must win scientific culture. Offended by glamorized science, they also sneer at popularized science. In blindly insisting upon "thorough" specialization they defeat their own ends, and turn countless youngsters away from science careers. My experience in University science teaching led me to wonder if our standard curricula are not losing splendid potential researchers and attracting to the laboratory many unimaginative people not fitted for science at all—youngsters whose psychological frailties lead them to seek refuge in false scientific dogma, rigid laws, laboratory aloofness. If there is one valid dramatization of events in science history it is the struggle of individuals against dogma and reaction, the victory of materialism over mysticism. But even here, though personalities play very important roles, the real hero is the scientific fact pitted against reactionary falsehood.

We have to understand that even though the monopolists are compelled to use science, they passionately hate science. They hate not just the teaching of evolution but the imparting to all people of scientific culture, the materialist truths and the vivid proof science offers as to the development of human knowledge and practice.

Reaction hates the glorious motives of science—to advance truth on all fronts, to master nature, to work cooperatively for collective good, to create new productive forces which have and shall change the world. Communists are universally respected for their resolute defense of the arts. It is time that we rose to the active defense of science, for on this sector of the people's war against monopoly there are shaping up crucial battles.

WHAT ABOUT THE FARMERS?

Farmer Blye from Kansas told NM's readers what should be done to unite the workers of factory and field. Some farm and labor leaders speak up.

A NEW MASSES FORUM

When a farmer came to town he wrote an article in NEW MASSES *about the problem of uniting labor and the farmers against their common foe, monopoly. Edward Blye's piece (NM, July 30), which put it up to organized labor to do something about it, aroused widespread interest. All who are concerned with developing the people's coalition toward independent political action see the problem as a decisive factor. Certainly, in the months to come, leading toward November 1948, the question of common action by the working people of factory and field is all-important.*

We asked several leaders of trade unions and farm organizations to comment on these questions:

1. Do you agree with the general criticism Mr. Blye makes of the labor movement's neglect of the farmer?

2. What steps would you suggest to establish actual cooperation between the organized workers and the masses of American farmers?

3. What, if anything, has your organization done to establish such cooperation?

Here are some of the replies we received.—THE EDITORS.

Forrest Payne

Business Agent, Local 758, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers

Mansfield, O.

WHEN "a farmer comes to town" two facts become apparent to him, two facts which may or may not have been lying dormant in the back of his mind for some time. Both of these facts were made very clear in Farmer Blye's article: (1) The farmer needs the worker; and (2) the worker needs the farmer.

But the farmer who came to town last July stopped at these two statements and is waiting for the worker to carry on from there while he, analyzing perfectly the tight spot that the farmers are in, waits for the labor movement to come on a white horse, its armor gleaming in the undiluted country sun, to rescue him from the grasping maw of capitalism.

No farmer can dump his problems into the lap of the labor movement and expect the trade unions to come forth with a ready-made solution. No more than, were the situation reversed with the farmers greatly organized, the workers could expect the farmers to come to town, organize their shops for them and destroy the parasite of profit that has been draining their life's blood. Industrial trade unions are organized to meet the needs of the workers, just as a farmers' union should be organized to aid the farmer. Neither one, alone, can solve the problems of the other. Together, with responsibility divided between them, *some* of the more immediate questions can be resolved.

True, the basis of the workers' troubles and the basis of the farmers' troubles lies in an economic system aimed at the destruction of economic security in the fields and in the factories. But the approach to a field

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and the approach to a factory are from different directions.

The farmer needs the worker, Farmer Blye says, as a market for his produce. Yes, but just as the worker sells his labor power to the big corporations and receives in return only a fraction of the value of the goods that he has produced, so too does a farmer sell the results of his labor power, not to the consumers, but to the large dairy, food and meat trusts, and receives for his efforts an even smaller fraction of their value.

Six years ago I came off a farm and went to town to make a living. Six years ago I agreed with Mr. Blye. Six years ago I was raising hell, saying "They organize the workers in town and leave us poor guys out here to starve."

But here's something I hadn't thought of then . . . something which, I believe, will help in rallying the farmers around the present-day issues and bring them along the rural road to socialism and collective farming which is the only and ultimate solution to their problems.

Labor today is organized on industrial lines . . . the auto workers, the steel workers, the electrical workers, etc. The farmer of today, to get more returns from his labor, to come into closer harmony with the workers of the cities, must organize within a national farmers' union along *crop-wide* lines . . . the wheat farmers of the prairies organized to meet their specific problems, the dairy farmers organized to meet their specific problems, the corn growers organized to meet their specific problems, and the small dirt farmer organized into local unions. With crop-wide unions as a basis the farmers could start machinery in motion for the selling of their products directly to the consumers, eliminating monopoly practices of set prices, short weights, supposed deterioration, and the forced control of the output of farm products.

This protection would be the result of collective action on the part of farmers and workers through the establishment of producers' cooperatives, owning their own milk, food or meat-processing plants and the means of distributing their produce.

The co-ops would be democratically controlled by both farmers and workers. They would collect the produce of the farmers, process it and sell it on the market and give a just share of the returns to the member-farmers themselves. The produce could be sold to the consumers cheaper and the farmers would still receive a return greater than what they now receive from the large food trusts. And through cheaper food prices, the workers would benefit.

It is easily recognizable that even this type of cooperative will not solve the basic problems of the farmers. The contradictions of capitalism still exist and their dissolution can be achieved only through socialism. Cooperatives, by their very nature, can never hope to grow large enough to rout the big finance corporations and the big monopolies out of existence. But they can weaken them . . . and they can serve as a means of educating the farmers and workers in the ways of organizations, collective action and collective results.

But how are the farmers to set up such cooperatives? It is just at this point that labor must take steps to aid the farmer. In the past it has, all too frequently, neglected this. Today's trade union movement must come to the realization that a number of its own members, especially workers in the seasonal shops, are farmers first, workers second. It must realize that without the aid of the farmer, its progressive program can be partly destroyed and the fruition of its program can be delayed. It must give physical and monetary aid to the farmers in advancing this program.

Trade union publications must carry farm columns. There must be trade union literature aimed at farmers. Farm research departments must be established within the framework of the trade unions. Labor strategy must be explained to the farmers.

But labor cannot hand economic security to the farmer on a golden platter. Let Farmer Blye go back to his Kansas farm and get busy among his neighbors. We'll meet him at the county seat and map our joint program there.

Mort Furay

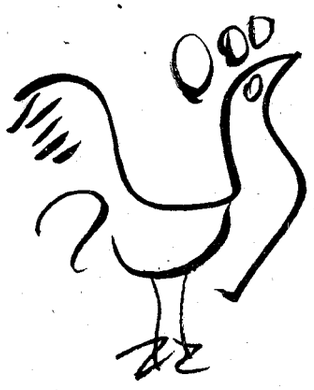
Regional Director, United Public Workers of America

Detroit

I DO AGREE with the criticism offered by Mr. Blye of the labor movement's neglect of the farmer. I would suggest the following steps be taken to establish actual cooperation between organized workers and the masses of farmers:

1. Attempt through the various state CIO Councils and the various local chapters of the Farm Bureau and the Grange and Union an exchange of speakers on a regular over-all program.

2. Through the same organized labor instrument establish a speakers' bureau for the purpose of debating before farm groups problems now facing the farmer; bring farm speakers to labor unions to debate similar problems as they might affect the workers.



3. Direct the national boys of organized labor to have printed in various forms the worker's story for distribution to the farmer at his home, and urge that farm organizations return that service.

Our organization has done very little toward establishing such cooperation, but has on occasion directed appeals to the farmers in support of wage demands before the local county road commission when we have been faced with fights from the road commissions. Our experience here has been anything but glorious or fruitful or successful. We issued a pamphlet in Tuscola, Michigan, asking the farmers to support our minimum wage demands pending before the Tuscola County Road Commission, and the response was thirteen letters printed in the Tuscola *County News* demanding that the County Road Commission fire the workers who joined the union. This happened in one of the richest farm communities in Michigan where thousands of dollars are made every year on sugar beets cultivated and harvested by Mexican migratory workers who, just previous to the war, were earning as little as fifty cent a day.

I might add that during the course of my travels through the state of Michigan, and boy I have travelled in every township, in every one of the eighty-three counties in the state of Michigan! I have discovered damn few Edward Blyes.

I am sure this is not what you want to hear, but they're facts as I see them.

Grant Oakes

President, United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers of America

Chicago

FARMER BLYE'S criticism is well founded. The labor movement is guilty of gross neglect in failing to win over its strongest natural ally, the farmer.

Of course, it is no simple job to win over a section of the population which has historically been the special target of corporate propaganda. And today much of the rural mind is scarred from the drive of native fascism to twist genuine farm grievances into a mass movement against labor and democracy. In the harvest recently completed, for example, transient combine operators from Kansas, Farmer Blye's own state, told South Dakota grain farmers that Hitler should have been allowed to kill all the Jews before he was conquered. Anti-Semitism, anti-labor fallacies—fascism, to call it by its right name—is marching through the countryside with even longer strides than the alarming steps it takes on city pavements.

This does not mean that the job of building farmer-labor understanding cannot be done. On the contrary: it points up the urgency of doing it. In spite of the elaborate propaganda network of Pennsylvania's Pews and Wall Street's Morgans, in spite of the contributions of the du Ponts and

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other monopolies to the campaign funds of reactionary politicians, most farmers can be won to an alliance with labor for the preservation of democracy against monopoly's assault.

The principal link in such a unified chain is a consistent struggle of the labor movement to keep family-type farmers from being robbed by corporate industry and swallowed by corporate agriculture. In other words, two-thirds of America's farmers will join with labor not out of some humanitarian sympathy, but when they understand that such an alliance is the condition of their own survival.

The junction of interest between farmers and labor is essentially political. Unity between them, therefore, must be built basically in political action. It is clear that each needs the votes of the other's Congressmen for the accomplishment of either a farm or labor program. And it is becoming clearer that a new party is needed to express this joint interest.

The United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers-CIO prides itself on its pioneering in this field. Owing to the nature of the work done by our members, we constitute a kind of natural bridge between workers and farmers. We recognize that building farm-labor understanding is not a task to be accomplished by sporadic activity when labor needs a hand in strikes (although this activity is valuable), but is a long-term job needful of daily attention.

We have therefore established a Farm Relation Department, under the direction of Homer Ayres, who left the ranch he had operated in South Dakota for thirty years in order to accept this post. This department has already issued specialized literature for farmers, which has met with the widest response of any such material I know of. The department is located in Rock Island, Illinois, convenient to the great corn, grain and ranching states of the Middle West. Our farm relations work consists of direct contact with farmers and farm organizations, on whatever level cooperation may be developed, and in a stimulation of our locals (dozens of which are strategically located in predominantly rural areas) to carry on consistent, daily political action in concert with their farm neighbors.

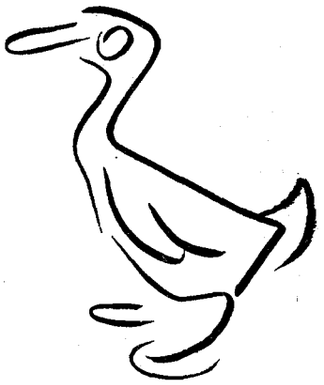
In conclusion, I offer the suggestion that the greatest single contribution that can be made to farm-labor unity is the support and building of the organization of family-type farmers, the National Farmers' Union.

James De Witt

Field Representative,
United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers

Milwaukee

BLYE'S criticism of the unions as to their neglect of the farmers is quite correct. I can readily see Mr. Blye's viewpoint, as I was raised on a central Indiana farm. For the last nine years I have acted as a



CIO representative in Wisconsin. In this capacity I have had much contact with workers in small towns who have recently come from the farm to the factory, or who still live on the farm. I have also been in policy-making bodies of the CIO in the state. Even the most progressive CIO and AFL unionists have sadly neglected making working arrangements with the farmers.

In this state, the Farmers' Union is the largest farm organization. However, no more than one-third of the farmers are organized in all three major farm groups. The AFL exchanges speakers with the Farmers' Union; beyond that they have not gone. The CIO has recently sent speakers out to Farmers' Union meetings to explain farm equipment strikes. The AFL has spread anti-CIO sentiments among the farmers' leaders in recent years, which has added to the confusion and natural prejudices. The action of the AFL teamsters and truck drivers' unions in forcing union organization on cooperative employes by intimidation and force has created an animosity that recognizes no difference between labor organizations.

The unions have failed to tell the farmers why they oppose the repeal of subsidies and the OPA. Nothing is done to combat the misrepresentation and outright lies given the farmers by the old-line farmers' journals, the organs of the farm groups other than the Farmers' Union, and the harmful propaganda and Red-baiting against the CIO and PAC by the Catholic Rural Life Conference.

I believe the CIO should build up a special list of farm leaders, from all levels, and send them a special bulletin, according to areas, on farm and labor problems as labor sees them. Political action cooperation should be beamed to the farmers in this bulletin. Local political action forums should be held to which farm leaders on the lower levels as well as the top men should be invited. At state capitals, labor members of the state legislatures should arrange meetings with farm political leaders to get cooperation on legislation beneficial to the farmer and to explain labor's opposition to other bills. Efforts should be made to establish labor information booths at county and state fairs. This can be done by county and state councils of the CIO and the AFL. Statewide radio hookup broadcasts can be arranged on problems like strikes, price control and subsidies, etc. A series of newspaper advertisements explaining labor's stand can be carried in the dailies and weeklies which have a large rural circulation.

The Wisconsin CIO Council recently had a statewide radio hookup that was intended to reach the farmers and small town people as well as labor. The Sheboygan CIO Council carried on a three-months advertising campaign explaining the CIO stand in the local paper, which reaches many thousands of rural readers. The Farm Equipment Workers printed a special leaflet showing the actual labor and material costs involved in the production of implements and tractors. We have just scratched the surface in our relations with the farmers. Labor must take the initiative because of its greater organization.

James G. Patton

President, National Farmers' Union

Denver

THE labor movement although it has done a very big job for its members, has almost entirely failed in telling its story to the American farmers. In spite of the fact that labor has, almost without exception, supported sound farm legislation and believed in an adequate price for farmers' products and an adequate income for farmers, a great majority of the farm people in America either do not recognize it or, more importantly, do not know it. Only one farm organization, the National Farmers' Union, has told its members the facts about organized labor. The farmer, to put it in the hardest terms, historically is opposed to the gigantic monopoly-controlled corporations in this country. All the way back through American history the liberal or progressive movements coming out of agriculture have been aimed at an attack on monopoly and for cooperation with labor. Labor has hid its light under a bushel. I suggest to the whole labor movement, the railroad brotherhoods, AFL and the CIO that they jointly raise a fund of $10,000,000, which is less than a dollar a member, to tell not only the American farmer but the American public the facts about the labor movement, its contribution to the war effort, the necessity for it to have purchasing power, and a proper evaluation of its very important part in the functioning of our whole economy. Further I suggest that the labor movement interest itself in aiding, in every way possible, the National Farmers' Union on an all-out organization drive for a million members by 1950.

A strong Farmers' Union in every state cooperating with independent or organized labor can give labor and the public the best guarantee that all farmers will hear both sides of the story. A Farmers' Union with a million members in the United States

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cooperating with organized labor and other public-minded groups can make many more changes like the one which was made in Montana recently, where I am told that the Farmers' Union gathered enough rural votes to provide the necessary balance needed to win for Leif Erickson against Wheeler. It seems to me that all of us who have a real stake in maintaining democracy must become very serious about understanding each other and about working closely and effectively with each other against the forces who have already headed us toward the rock of economic disaster and chaos.

Ella Reeve Bloor

April Farms,
Coopersburg, Pa.

THE progressive farmers out here in the countryside were deeply interested in Mr. Blye's article. He indicates that he is an "untypical" farmer, but after all, his personal criticisms of the attitude of the townfolk toward the farmers is a very real and factual criticism of the way farmers feel about such an attitude, especially when he criticizes them for condescension: "No farmer is going to take condescension without raring up on his hind legs and becoming positively hostile. That's no way to bring farmer-labor solidarity out of the union halls. That's the carbon monoxide of misunderstanding that hits our farmer in the face when he comes to visit on the home ground of labor."

Mr. Blye, in my opinion, touches the heart of the whole disunity which exists between town and country folks by bringing out their complete misunderstanding of their need of each other.

We all know that there has been a direct change in the relationship between the farmers and the large labor unions interested in food processing. Small farmers especially note this change because of the support they have received in their struggles for better contracts. Only recently the packinghouse workers, in their tremendous struggle, were helped by the farmers, and the workers of the Campbell Soup Company who were on the picket lines against their factory were supported by the tomato producers, who helped them also by their united struggles to get better contracts for their produce. The tomato growers themselves joined the Farmers' Union, realizing how much more strength they had found in their unity with the industrial workers during the strike, which was ended satisfactorily in ten minutes after workers and farmers had demonstrated their unity on the picket line.

This support by the tomato growers was emphasized in a recent editorial in the *Eastern Union Farmer*. Said editor Frances Leiber: "The proposal of the Farmers' Union to become a collective bargaining agency between produce growers and the canners has received wide and enthusiastic support. Meetings have been held in New Jersey and Pennsylvania by the Farmers' Union, focussed upon the great need of improving their contracts."

Farmers need better radio programs. The farmers listen to the radio more than any other section of the people, and what do they get? As the farmer from Kansas says, "Why must they have such vicious propaganda and such trashy literature for the farmers? Why can't we have a better education?"

It seems to me that what the farmer needs, not only for himself but for the youth growing up around him, are stories of real life—adventure, yes, and real American history stories. They are just as much interested in good things—more interested—then they are in the trash that comes to them in murder and mystery stories. We can prove that by the fact that in some parts of the Middle West, notably Minneapolis, Superior and other Northwestern cities, the large papers have regular radio reporters who interview lecturers and people of interest who come to town and have long interesting columns for their readers, and these are appreciated very much by the farmers. One regular interviewer in Minneapolis came to my hotel on my arrival there, after a trip to the Soviet Union in 1937, to ask me to tell him all the facts I had about the women in the Soviet Union, about their child care movements over there and the culture given to the women themselves. The questions this reporter asked me were very deep and thoughtful, touching the real life of the people over there, and we find that the men and women of the countryside of America generally are deeply interested in knowing more about the great Soviet Union and its success.

I have stressed the economic unity of farmers and workers. But I feel that the strongest weapon they have today is their political unity. If they would use that power to elect in every state, officials who would act upon the needs of the farmers and the needs of the workers, I feel they would see themselves the need of political unity in making better laws and also in enforcing them. Today many of the large farmer's organizations, as well as some few labor leaders, are following too closely upon the heels of machine leaders in the legislature, in opposition to the welfare and the best interests of the whole farmers' community. I speak as a farmer's wife from Bucks County and feel that the women also should interest themselves in their great power to help better their family conditions at the ballot box.

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review and comment

BLEAK HOUSE

A politico-literary cult is erected on a dead-end street. The rubble of "Partisan Review."

By BARBARA GILES

THE PARTISAN READER, *edited by William Phillips and Philip Rahv. Dial Press. $3.75.*

A GOOD deal is claimed for this anthology by its editors. Their most modest assertion is that it represents the best writing published in *Partisan Review* during the magazine's first ten years. Somewhat more boldly they state that the magazine itself, under their editorship, has been a "periodical anthology of the best available writing." Indeed, it has been "something more"; it has, for example, effected a "union of sensibility with a radical temper" which has attracted some 6,000 readers lucky enough to realize with Messrs. Phillips and Rahv —according to Messrs. Phillips and Rahv—that "the claims of the imagination cannot be subordinated to the utilitarian demands of the political mind." The editor's minds, they proudly make clear, are political but not utilitarian. Thus while they are "truly radical in the Marxist sense," they would die before having anything to do with "party organizations and programs," or political action. They tried that once, and look what happened—

This is what happened. *Partisan Review*, you may remember, was founded by the John Reed Club of New York and continued under the John Reed Club for about two years. During that time Phillips and Rahv were on the editorial board where, to judge by their own account, they spent much of their energy trying to rescue the pure maiden Literature from the locomotive of history and at the same time preserve their "faith" in Communism and the USSR. When the Moscow trials were held the "last barriers" of the faith were swept away and the two editors were shocked into paralysis. After a year, however, they pulled themselves together and came out with a magazine of their own which they coolly named *Partisan Review*—a "renovated" *Partisan Review*—completely different, in fact—but a good name still.

All that should be past history, but it isn't past to Phillips and Rahv. They are still rescuing Literature, still declaring their independence, still refusing the "easy comforts" of literary life in the revolutionary movement. Methinks the lads do protest too much. The revolutionary movement has not yet attempted to seduce Messrs. Phillips and Rahv, and its easy comforts are least apparent to those who are actually drawn to it. But let that go. The unpolished truth is that these two gentlemen hate communism (which they call "Stalinism," presumably to distinguish themselves from the cabbage variety of Red-baiters) and on that hatred they have built a politico-literary cult, established a magazine, and attracted many a writer ranging from the politically innocent to the old-time haters like Farrell and Edmund Wilson, who would hardly dispute the editors' opinion of the late Trotsky as a "great exponent of the Marxist doctrine."

Ostensibly the only rule on admission to the cult is artistic devotion, strictly non-utilitarian. Its disciples, however, make themselves politically useful in a number of ways. George Orwell, their London correspondent, was not too proud to serve the Trotskyite POUM in Spain or to pen an inartistic fable presenting the people of the USSR as sheep and horses and their leaders as swine. Eleanor Clark turns out an "allegory" ("The Bitter Box") wherein revolutionaries are depicted in a way to restore the hair and raise the fallen arches of a Rankin committeeman. It is no accident that such works rejoice the openly organized Soviet-loathers and Red-baiters. Nor is it chance that when a Kravchenko or Valtin goes literary the *Partisan Review's* leading critics are always on hand to strain a "gem" and a "masterpiece" from the mud.

Hatred of communism, however, is only the cult's foundation. The superstructure is a bit more complex, as its builders dislike or suspect everything that Communists stand for, which includes a world of progressive ideas and people, while at the same time—being "radicals"—they "despise" the bourgeoisie. The result is a building with many rooms but few occupants, meager furnishings and no central heating.

In all this bleak dwelling, the bleakest room is reserved for "claims of the imagination," or creative writing. Naturally—for how, lacking faith in people, can you write about them creatively? In the short stories published here, the characters are largely misfits, oddities, failures, who can neither understand their queerness nor struggle against their miseries. So far from being "in conflict with society," as one reviewer has described them, they have no vitality even for personal conflict. However one may define the qualities of great literature, nearly everybody will agree that vitality is indispensable. And whatever else might be said of Communist or other left-wing writing, it does have this quality—of excitement, motion conflict, or affirmation. In the best of bourgeois literature, it is present in any given mood or situation. Even the portrayal of despair can have vitality. But when the despair is in the writer himself, when he is as hopeless as the characters, we get instead of tragedy only a dull pessimism—than which nothing can be duller. True, the stories fulfill the modern requirements of simplicity, smoothness and restraint, and in that sense they are "well written"—as the modern, simple, restrained accolade goes. However such a stylistic surface, which can be really effective with a dramatic content, does nothing to improve a lifeless one. Rather, it merges into the general dreariness—as in the case of Mary McCarthy's long account of a grubby, self-conscious love affair in a Pullman drawing-room, or Isaac Rosenfeld's

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story of a self-pitying young hero who writes abject letters to a girl who hasn't seen him in three years and who doesn't answer him. ("There's a comfort," this young man writes, "a perpetual cushion in certain kinds of misery—you rest on it, just as a contented man rests at the top of his career. Top or bottom, either way—but no struggling in the middle!" Which expresses in two sentences an attitude that pervades large portions of the anthology.)

The poetry is not quite so depressing. There are seventy-one pages of it, and in such an accumulation it would be strange not to find instances of exceptional imagery and insight. Yet here too the chill prevails, often deepened by obscurity. After the poems come nearly 400 pages of literary discussion, essays, brief reviews and miscellany. Corners of culture are explored with pencil flashlights and discoveries reported at length, some of them interesting, some at least worth discussing, and too many that reflect only the explorer's venom or self-interest. Edmund Wilson finds that Flaubert saw farther than Marx because Senecal, the socialist-turned-cop in *L'Education Sentimentale*, foreshadows the "police state" of the USSR! Mr. Rahv discovers, in a strained and often silly article, that the anarchists of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* were the prototypes of Soviet leaders today. Now and then a feeble cheer goes up as an explorer comes upon a possibly dry, safe spot for the artists in this world of storm. In 1939 Mr. Rahv not only envisioned an "intellectual minority [which] can still maintain its identity," but actually assigned it a function: to "warn." Others are less hopeful. Louise Bogan has become convinced that "there are only a few people capable of the esthetic experience," and Lionel Trilling sadly differentiates between persons with serious ideas and "the great mass of people." But for a fulldress parade of snobbishness, with the brass glittering, you should meet Clement Greenberg. Dividing all contemporary culture into *avant-garde* and *kitsch* (ersatz culture), Mr. Greenberg asserts that the latter dominates the Nazi and fascist worlds, the Soviet Union, and practically all the peoples of capitalist democracies. And what to do about it? There is only one solution, Mr. Greenberg declares—rather remote, perhaps, but no other will serve—international socialism. Meanwhile, as Mr. Rosenfeld's hero says: no struggling in the middle!

Nakata

Aside from a few poems, very little from the Communist period of *Partisan Review* is represented here. There is a story by James T. Farrell which indicates that the writer's "social protest" days were already numbered by his dead-end view of humanity, and an excellent article by Max Braunschweig on "The Philosophic Thought of the Young Marx." The vigor and clarity of Mr. Braunschweig's discussion, appearing in this volume, may startle you until you notice the date underneath: 1936. That was before "renovation" had banished the spirit of John Reed from the pages of *Partisan Review*.

Changing Human Nature

COLOR BLIND: A WHITE WOMAN LOOKS AT THE NEGRO, *by Margaret Halsey. Simon & Shuster. $2.50.*

THIS brief book is marked by some serious errors, a few extremely doubtful generalizations and simplifications, and occasional contradictions. It is, nevertheless, a healthy work, and one whose influence, generally, will be wholesome, so that its wide distribution (already guaranteed it as the November selection of the Book Find Club) is welcome.

First, to indicate some of the deficiencies: dismissing Africa as one huge "Jungle," which has never produced, and could not produce, cultures comparable to that of European civilizations, betrays a rather shocking degree of geographic and historic misinformation. The mythology of anti-Negro chauvinism, including all the sexual overtones, is not a post-Civil War development, and the Southern oligarchy in "arguing against freeing the slaves" certainly did not "base their argument on the purely legal concept of states' rights." Property rights were very much more fundamental to their defense, but they not

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only did not neglect the arguments of racism—they invented them.

Mrs. Halsey is guilty of an oversimplification of the facts concerning the family and sex life of so-called "primitive" peoples which reaches the level of distortion. There is no uniform rule on such matters applicable to all these people, nor even, in many instances, to all members of one particular group. This error reaches dangerous ground when, basing herself upon the alleged higher sexual indulgence of "primitives," she equates the oppressed condition of the American Negro with such "primitiveness," and offers this as a rationalization for what are asumed to the less inhibited sexual mores of the Negro. Many of the assumptions basic to this rationalization are open to serious question, and the rationalization itself actually bulwarks the chauvinism which Miss Halsey wants to combat.

The reviewer was disappointed to find repeated in this work the ritual of obeisance before the colossal, and hollow, idol of Myrdal's *Dilemma*. It is here described as "the definitive book on race relations in America," though the author adds that most people would "not have time to get through it all." Since her point of view is diametrically opposed to that enunciated in the "definitive" sham, it may be believed that Mrs. Halsey, too, did "not have time to get through it all."

For quite unlike the Swedish Social Democrat, Miss Halsey believes that "the real basis of prejudice against Negroes is economic and historical," and generally insists, correctly, upon the materialist roots of the Negro's super-exploitation. Yet, even at this point, there are regrettable elements of contradiction and hesitancy. Thus hand in hand with the quotation last cited will be found the remark that overcoming prejudice requires an assault, not upon the actions of the bigots, but rather upon "the hallucinations which are responsible for what they do." And what is responsible for the hallucinations, and what social functions do these hallucinations perform? Further on, this is again contradicted for the reader is told, in a phrase seriously marred by the parenthetic interjection of what appears to be studied wonderment, that "the attack has to be mainly on the oppressive force (whatever it is) which created the prejudice rather than on the prejudice itself."

This somewhat nebulous and con-

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tradictory diagnosis results in rather unsatisfactory programmatic suggestions amounting to little more than letter-writing, a reading course, and the reminder that decent and courteous conduct should guide our personal relationships. Political and economic organization, association and activity —above all the key importance of the organized labor movement—are conspicuously absent.

There remain two somewhat related cliches reiterated in this book with which serious issue must be taken. Miss Halsey is of the opinion that democratic societies must "bumble and fumble and lurch and sprawl toward their goals," for otherwise they "cease to be democracies." There is neither logical nor historical justification for this assiduously spread apologia for ineptitude and inaction. Divided societies, class societies, exploiting societies may "bumble and fumble," but neither division nor inefficiency is a necessary component of actual democracy.

And, finally, one is told once more that "the modification of prejudice takes a long time," but this will not stand the test of careful scrutiny. The fact is that the modification of prejudice has frequently occurred with great rapidity. For example, the violent prejudices of several thousand American soldiers (many of them Southern) were modified in less than two months by association with some 2,600 Negroes who fought with them in mixed units in Europe during the closing weeks of the Second World War.

The prejudices of tens of millions of inhabitants of Czarist Russia —"the prison-house of nations"— were drastically modified overnight, historically speaking, in the Soviet Union of equal peoples. And anyone who has any acquaintance with union activity—particularly in the maritime, meat-packing, steel, tobacco and automobile industries—knows that the modification of prejudices need not, and frequently does not, "take a long time."

And, as a final example of this truth, one may cite *Color Blind* itself. For the great value of this work, and that to which most of it is devoted, is its description of how a servicemen's canteen was operated, during the late war, on the principle of no discrimination.

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chauvinism at its most sensitive point—social equality; and yet, as Miss Halsey recounts in the delightful and sparkling manner associated with all her writing, it was met and overcome. This was done, and done quickly, by the determination and by the courage of the Negro and white men and women who created and maintained the service, and who insisted upon a fraternal and democratic code of behavior. Of course, there were difficulties and incidents and renegades but, as the author is at pains to show, these were never so serious or numerous as really to threaten the success of the enterprise; and the more timorous ones were pleasantly surprised to learn how vulnerable the American pattern of Jim Crowism—even on the social level and under present conditions—really is.

The result of this work shows, again, the vital truth basic to any effort to combat bigotry—the need, as one of the Negroes connected with Miss Halsey's work put it, for "action—not vague, unimplemented talk about how it is all going to be a matter of education."

This is the crux of the matter. Positive, organized mass action, directed against the bigots and their laws and codes and patterns, and against the political and economic interests which create and feed upon racism, represents the best education on the one hand, and, on the other, the basic weapon for change.

Color Blind demonstrates, in an empirical fashion and within the limits of the walls of this one canteen, the truth of this fact. Thereby Miss Halsey has rendered a distinct service.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Books Received

THE PLOTTERS, *by John Roy Carlson. Dutton.* $3.50.

THE THEORY OF HUMAN CULTURE, *by James Feibleman. Duell, Sloan & Pearce.* $5.

THE SERVILE STATE, *by Hilaire Belloc. Holt.* $2.50.

THUNDER OUT OF CHINA, *by Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby. William Sloan Associates.* $3.

LORD WEARY'S CASTLE, *poems by Robert Lowell. Harcourt, Brace.* $2.50.

THIEVES IN THE NIGHT, *by Arthur Koestler. MacMillan.* $2.75.

LADDERS OF FIRE, *by Anais Nin. Dutton.* $2.75.

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sights and sounds

"THE ICEMAN COMETH"

O'Neill's world is a stagnant puddle of decay, in which "sinful" man must flounder and die.

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

WITH the exception of three prostitutes whose role is subsidiary and less important than that of the offstage women characters—two wives and a mother, one long deceased and hypocritically lamented, one freshly murdered and one betrayed into jail, the characters of Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* are all men, and, with two exceptions, they are all incurable alcoholics.

They include the Harvard graduate son of a jailed stock market racketeer; an ex-anarchist who has rejected anarchism as merely another form of the power drive which his comrades oppose and envy in its established forms and who has sunk into apathetic cynicism mitigated by "philosophy"; another anarchist so sodden in drink that when he emerges for brief intervals out of his coma it is only to yammer an inarticulate hatred of workers as "slaves"; a jobless publicity man who drinks, so he tells himself, to blot out his wife's infidelity; a Boer general and a British captain who observe a fuzzy truce over the whiskey bottle; a Negro who recalls former great days as operator of a gambling house when he was able to pay big protection money to the police and stand generous treats to rum hounds; a young sot who takes the earnings of one of the three "tarts," as they insist on being called, while he and she nurse the "pipe dream" of eventual marriage and a Jersey farm on which they will settle down to bask in curative Nature; an ex-carnival hand whose "pipe dream" is to return to glory as short-change artist in a cashier's cage; and a dismissed cop whose "pipe dream" is to get to the right higher-ups whose influence will restore him to the Force.

The one sober man among the habitues is an Italian bartender quietly making his pile and adding to it by the earnings of his "stable" of two "tarts." The completing figure is the owner of the joint, Harry Hope, himself an alcoholic, on whose befuddled generosity the rest live. He is a former small-time Tammany politician mourning a wife dead twenty years, grief for whom has presumably kept him from stirring out of the place ever since. Two outsiders intrude upon this snug nest of boozy torpor. One is an entirely new figure, a youth who is the son of the arrested woman leader of a West Coast anarchist group and former sweetheart of the ex-anarchist philosopher. The youth has come to the older man for help in a personal crisis. He has come in the belief and hope that the older man is his father and that he will get from him the stern but obligated direction that he craves, as do all orphans whether their parents are missing through death or illegitimacy.

The other outsider is an old attraction, a free-spending salesman named Hickman—Hickey, for short. Twice a year, on his return from sales trips but particularly on the occasion of Harry Hope's birthday, such as tonight, Hickey stands unlimited treat to the bums and entertains them with drummer's jokes culminating in a description of the probable assignation of his wife with the iceman.

The scene opens in the small hours of the night with the bums asleep or yawning over the saloon tables, waiting for Hickey. Never before has he been so late and from the desultory remarks about it a conversation flares up in which, one after the other, they reveal themselves. Among other things it gradually becomes clear that the youth has betrayed his mother to the police and has come to his hoped-for father in the belief that he too has nursed a vengeful hate for the woman, a hate that has been the other side of their dependent love. He has come either to be justified in their mutual hate for her or to be condemned in their mutual love for her. If the latter, the youth wants to be ordered to atone, by suicide, for the living prison death he has inflicted on his mother. By the time Hickey arrives the various self-revelations are almost complete; only a few additional strokes are needed to fill out or correct the pictures.

BUT the Hickey who arrives is a changed man and the good time they have been waiting for turns out an ordeal. Hickey provides drinks and food on a more lavish scale than ever before but he himself will not take a drop; and in place of his drummer's hilarity he gives them sermons. He explains that he no longer needs the stupefaction of liquor to bring him peace. He has achieved serenity by facing out the conflict within himself, by surrendering his "pipe dream" and accepting reality. The process was hard and agonizing, he admits, but it made a new man of him. The contentment he has reached through it is so satisfying that he feels the salesman's compulsion with a good thing in his hand to sell it to the others.

Under Hickey's prodding the drunks, one by one, go through the torment of "facing themselves," acquiring in the process a thorough hatred of Hickey, one another and themselves. The usually rowdy banquet becomes a lugubrious confessional and a recriminatory free-for-all. The five-cent rotgut whiskey they have been swilling suddenly loses its kick. Even the birthday champagne tastes flat. Their own desire for it is gone; and when they try, deliberately, to drink themselves into insensibility, the liquor has no effect.

But through this they arrive at the final stages of self-revelation. It turns out that the jobless publicity man has driven his wife into the arms of a lover to justify an already settled alcoholism; that it was an act of treachery to his people that makes it unsafe for the Boer general to live in South Africa; that it was the British captain's embezzlement of regimental funds that makes it similarly advisable for him to live at a distance; that the Negro hates the white trash here, and the white world in general; that Harry Hope hated his "beloved" wife for her nagging efforts to keep him sober and push his political career, and his twenty-

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year immurement in the dive is to shut out all reminders of the ambitions she had for him.

Hickey gets them at last, all except the ex-anarchist philosopher, to put their pipe dreams to the test. They go out, some in clothes redeemed for them from the pawnshop by Hickey, to get jobs; Harry Hope to take that walk around the ward that he has been promising himself for twenty years; and the yong sot and his tart to get married and look for that farm in Jersey. But the sortie into the world outside is brief and despairing. Each returns miserable and licked. The "tarts" finally concede that they are "whores," the bartender that he is a "pimp," and the young sot and his tart that they are not an engaged couple but "whore" and "pimp."

At this point Hickey in a long and jarringly explicit speech anounces that he has killed his wife to be free of the sense of guilt which her loving patience and unfailing forgiveness of his drunken adulteries has brought to an unbearable intensity. Death was the iceman into whose arms he has finally pushed her. As the police, whom he himself has summoned, take him away, the ex-anarchist philosopher can no longer maintain his indifference. He understands that he alone resisted Hickey's call to face oneself because he is the worst failure among them and has the least courage. In his agony he says the word that frees the youth to kill himself. The sound of the body, crashing offstage, sends the distraught philosopher rushing out of the room.

With Hickey gone, and his counsel pitched outside as the ravings of a murderous lunatic, the rest return to their drink. They swallow it with revived need and the drink itself recovers its kick. The cozy anesthesia returns; the pipe dreams are efficacious again.

Benkane.

THIS drink-numbed guilt is what the play is about. To me the most astonishing thing about the play is that the critics, along with O'Neill, have been trying to read universal significance into this confined thing; have taken this tiny, special, remote and unrepresentative puddle of life as the basis for a judgment of humanity. They have ignored a setting overwhelmingly larger, filled with characters overwhelmingly different— the purposeful world outside and the undefeated people moving vigorously and freely in it, those who have the will to struggle, to forgive, to endure, who do without the paralysis and the pipe dream.

Curiously enough this is implied all through the play itself, and it is another revelation of the extent to which artists are unaware of much in their own work that O'Neill has been unable to read his own implications. The knowledge and the value of the working world outside is implied in the very content of the "pipe dreams" of the derelicts. The content is work, security and love, which in the world outside are not surrendered, are at least struggled for if not yet wholly won. The ex-publicity man, the ex-Harvard law student, the ex-policeman, the ex-carnival hand, even the Boer general and the British captain all go out in at least a pretense of finding work. The young sot makes one last effort to dignify his shabby love.

And in another, and tangential way, the values of the outer world intrude even in the consciousness of the one man who profits in the puddle world. Forced to concede that he is a "pimp," the bartender seeks to win some social sanction, in the puddle world at least, by trying to reason the youth and the philosopher into a co-career in pimping. And he is rejected. In these and other ways, the O'Neill who wrote the play contradicts the O'Neill commenting on it.

The simple fact is that the play is far too restricted in its range and in the very special nature of its personal conflicts to serve as social commentary or as a judgment upon life or upon any large reality of life. What the play comes to is a reduced and thereby intensified reconsideration of the problem that has obsessed O'Neill throughout the second phase of his work, the problem of sin and self-punishment. That problem has pressed with a double weight upon him, the weight of his Catholic original-sin-and-life-long-penitence-superstition and the different but, to him, equally oppressive Freudian concept of the guilt sense born of secret hostility to those supposedly beloved and admired. The undeniable impact of the play comes from the fact that, unlike O'Neill's previous psychoanalytic plays, which were like caricatures in their literal Freudianism, what is applied in *The Iceman Cometh* is an asimilated knowledge that is used deftly and not stuck on like labels.

Critics have sought to explain what is effective in the play either as the appeal of O'Neill's compassion or as the operation of his supposedly fabulous sense of "theater." Neither of these seem to me to satisfy as explanations. For if what O'Neill says of humanity were what he actually felt, and not the evasive rationalization that it seems to me, then he could not have put compassion into the play. The compassion is there but it arises out of O'Neill's confining himself to an essentially simple human ordeal, the ordeal of guilt.

On the other hand, if the impact of the play is to be attributed to O'Neill's sense of theater how is one to account for such defiance of sure-fire theater as a playing time that far exceeds the supposed endurance of the modern Western audience; a long first act which is almost continuous exposition and, to use the critical adjective, "static," and therefore "bad theater"; and finally, in the last act, that supposedly fatal piece of "bad theater" the longer-than-five-minute speech — a fifteen-minute speech, in fact, and a rather poor one as well. Here is enough "bad theater" to counteract any "good theater," if one looks to play-carpentering know-how to account for O'Neill's dramatic effect.

The fact of the matter is that as in greater plays, such as the Greek tragedies and the Elizabethan tragedies, *The Iceman Cometh* draws its power from the conflict in the conscience. That remains today, as it always has been, the supreme source of dramatic conflict. It is given here in a peculiarly restricted and a peculiarly muddy form which has kept it from having any large or clear significance; but it is packed full within its particular limitations; it concentrates great force in its small area.

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mutilated its potential social inferences the play offers nothing to take away as a philosophical conclusion. No later statements, sweet or bitter, about humanity that O'Neill can make can put into the play what is not there. Actually O'Neill's best opportunity for a philosophical statement is evaded. The philosophical ex-anarchist, who is the most articulate character in the play and, more than any other, O'Neill's spokesman, should offer some concluding statement—as the audience expects him to—when he realizes the utter hollowness of his philosophy of apathy. But instead he runs off the stage, silent. Even as commentary the running off has no significance, for he has been running off all through the play. And at that point it becomes O'Neill's evasion. For at that climax, where some conclusion about life should be uttered, nothing is said except that the drinks have recovered their kick. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that chronic alcoholics feel best when drunk or, to extend it, that those who cannot live without an excessive load of illusions must have an excessive load of illusions.

As a production there is nothing the American theater has recently put on that equals this Theater Guild offering. Here the Guild functons as an established theater should. The performance has the suppleness, the ease, the conviction of ensemble acting somewhat comparable to the great Russian companies. It would be pointless to single out individual renditions and grade them. For instance, James Barton as Hickey seemed to give the least assured performance but a reading of the script published concurrently with the opening of the play* shows his part to be the one written with the least assurance, and shows that, in fact, Barton made up in the performance for special difficulties in the role. Finally, one must pay tribute to the magnificent sets designed by Robert Edmond Jones.

the clearing house

THE New Institute, 29 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, is offering a program of screen and radio production training. Classes will cover the entire field of script writing, camera technique, acting, voice, etc. The faculty will include Paul Strand, who photographed *The Wave;* Irving Lerner, director of *Hymn of the Nations,* and Leo Hurwitz, co-producer director of *Native Land.* A complete studio with camera, lighting, sound projectors, cutting and editing equipment should give eager students all the equipment they need to turn out some highly exciting stuff.

The New York Committee to Win The Peace will present Theater Incorporated's revival of the J. M. Synge masterpiece, "Playboy of The Western World," at a benefit performance November 6. The production, directed by Guthrie McClintic, stars Burgess Meredith, Mildred Natwik, Daphne Dunn and Barry Macollum. Tickets can be had by calling MU 4-7969 or writing to the committee at 23 West 26th St.

To readers of "The Clearing House" who requested the address of "Ideas For Action": it is 110-34 73rd Road, Forest Hills, L. I.

RUTH STARR.

Calm Men in a Gale

(Continued from page 7)

J. Edgar Hoover on behalf of General Motors. I don't know whether you've read about the conference of the progressives in Chicago a few days ago. We ran a first-hand account of it, and I'll send you a copy. They're laying the grass-roots basis for a real people's movement, a people's crusading coalition. Everybody should enlist in it who agreed with FDR in 1944.

Meanwhile labor, the Negro people, progressives, the Communists, are out ringing doorbells, buttonholing the electorate, explaining the issues. We need a lot of that, more than has been done to date. And there'll be more. You know the registration upset all the talk about apathy. The people want to do something. We've got to get to them with the facts. The enemy is doing plenty, for their side. I remember you're from Brooklyn, Chris. I can tell you we're doing everything to roll up a powerful ALP vote in New York. And a big vote for Ben Davis and Bob Thompson, the Communist candidates. I don't know if you know them, Chris, but these boys are like you. You'd like them. They don't get scared when there's a stiff gale blowing. And they know how to fix the machinery in the engine-room. Let's hear from you. Best,

JOE.

* THE ICEMAN COMETH, *by Eugene O'Neill. Random House. $2.50.*

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Q.—Tell me some.

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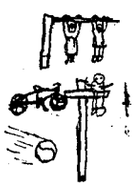

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